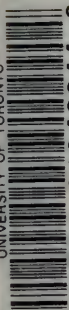


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How
to
Publish



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How to Publish
a Book or Article

And

How to Produce a Play

Advice to Young Authors

By

LEOPOLD WAGNER

London: George Redway

1898

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31/8/98

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P R E F A C E

SEVERAL books have appeared under titles similar to that which I have chosen, but they have been written in the interests of a printing firm or of an authors' society. Professing to give information of practical value to writers, these books have obscured real knowledge by concentrating attention upon details such as pertain to the stationer, the printer, and binder, throwing no light whatever upon the vital subject of obtaining a publisher. In the present work I have aimed at answering the question that is upon the lips of every young author—"How can I find a publisher for what I have written?" A full answer to this question must include a discussion of the principles upon which work is accepted by those to whom literature is a trade, and I have accordingly assumed the responsibility for many statements which represent the views of publishers and their readers, of editors of magazines and newspapers, and of managers of theatres. There are of course authors who are a law unto themselves, but this book is not designed for such. I write for those who are anxious to learn the rules of the game thoroughly and at once, before they begin to

play, rather than acquire them as each mistake is paid for. I venture to hope that the circulation of this little book will be the means of promoting a good understanding between authors and publishers, journalists and editors, playwrights and managers—in short, between producer and consumer.

L. W.

LONDON, 1897.

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HOW TO PUBLISH

I BOOKS

AUTHORS AND LITERATURE

THE first thing to be considered in a work of this nature is the question, "What is an author?" If we take up a dictionary, we shall find him described as "one who produces, originates, or creates something; specifically, one who writes a book." As there are so many different kinds of books, there are so many different kinds of authors. But the application of the term is much more general than this. Everything printed and published, or merely written, which comes under the broad, indefinite head of Literature, is the work of an author. The respective writers of a technical treatise, a book of travel, a sensational novel, a political pamphlet, a newspaper article, a melodrama, a drawing-room ballad, and a comic song, are all authors. It does not, however, follow that any one of these produc-

tions deserves to be classed as *Literature*—by which is meant History, Poetry, Drama, Fiction, and *Belles-Lettres*, set forth with such elegance of diction and style that it stamps itself upon its own and succeeding generations as part and parcel of the whole body of a nation's learning.

A piece of writing, then, to be really Literature, should merit a place among those works which have established themselves as accepted models of literary art. This is the aim of the *true* author—to produce a work of enduring value, a lasting contribution to his country's literature. Though he may not be able, like the historians Gibbon and Green, Lecky and Froude, to make a particular subject the study of his whole life, he should strive to do his very best for love of literature, let the subject of his work be what it may.

Looking around us from this point of view, we shall find a very small proportion of the printed matter which is daily glutting the book-market worthy of the name of literature.¹ Still, for want of

¹ "The true man of letters always was and always must be a lay priest, even though he seem neither to preach nor to be religious in the popular sense of those terms. The qualities to be sought for in literature are therefore inspiration and sincerity. The man of letters is born, not made. His place is in the temple, and it is not his fault that the money-changers have set up their stalls there. But, in addition to these few chosen spirits, born in every age to be its teachers, there is an overwhelming multitude of writers called into being by the conditions of the time. These are the artists whom Stevenson likened to the 'Daughters of Joy.' They are cunning craftsmen, turning out what the public demands,

a better name, books and pamphlets of every conceivable kind are broadly regarded, in common parlance, as literature. It is well, perhaps, that those who are competent to judge of such matters, should set themselves the task of drawing some distinction between literature and mere scribbling, between bookwriting and bookmaking. The Society of Antiquaries admits to fellowship only authors of *bonâ fide* archæological works conspicuous for original research, thus setting up a standard which the average compiler can rarely hope to reach. Again, when an author who finds himself in necessitous circumstances makes an appeal for assistance to the Royal Literary Fund, he is required to deposit the whole of his published writings with the committee for examination. Novels, not actually historical romances, do not count, nor do magazine articles, plays, or compilations. The hard-and-fast line drawn by the examining committee is that he shall have furnished his quota to the national literature. If his work fails to come up to their standard, his application is dismissed. In their opinion, he has not produced any LITERATURE: *ergo*, he is an author only in name. A captious critic might indeed take exception to the term "author" as applied to many whose work reaches even this high standard,

without any priestly consciousness, and sometimes even without conscience—mere tradesmen, with, at bottom, the souls of tradesmen."—I. Zangwill, in "Without Prejudice."

since the literati of the past are invariably classified into poets, historians, philosophers, novelists, dramatists, essayists, &c. Nevertheless, as a generic term for living writers, it will serve.

AUTHORS AND THEIR WORK

Between the cultured man of letters, whose aim is to produce enduring work, and the latest literary lion who has made a hit with the book of the season, is a very wide gulf. The one has in prospect a niche in the Temple of Fame; the other must needs be content with a fleeting popularity. The one devotes all his energies to the attainment of an artistic ideal; the other too often is content to labour only for those pecuniary rewards that follow in the train of public applause.

Between these two extremes, authors are of many grades. When we reflect upon the great spread of education in these days, and learn that more than 3000 readers' tickets are issued every year from the British Museum, we can understand how the mass¹ of second and third-rate literature comes into existence. There is evidently a demand for work of a comparatively low standard, and to meet this demand, thousands of pens are daily exercised by all

¹ The annual output of new books, including new editions, is now estimated at 5000 volumes—nearly sixteen on every working day throughout the year.

sorts and conditions of men and women, in town and country. It is presumed that the readers of these pages are among those who have determined to join this army of literary workers.

De Quincey was wont to observe that "no man can succeed in the cultivation of the literary art who is not already in possession of an assured income." Certain it is that instances where a truly great work was produced under conditions unfavourable to a contented mind are remarkably few. We are all familiar with Sir Walter Scott's dictum that "Literature is a good staff, but a poor crutch." William Gifford, the editor of the *Quarterly Review*, who knew the drudgery of writing for a living, was once heard to say that "a single hour of composition, won from the business of the day, is worth more than the whole day's toil of him who works at the trade of literature. In the one case, the spirit comes joyfully to refresh itself, like a hart to the waterbrook; in the other, it pursues its miserable way, panting and jaded, with the dogs of hunger and necessity behind."

The advice which Charles Lamb and Coleridge gave to their young friends was to much the same effect. "With the single exception of one extraordinary man," said the latter, "I have never known an individual, least of all an individual of genius, healthy or happy without a profession; *i.e.* some regular employment which does not depend on the

will of the moment, and which can be carried on so far mechanically that an average quantum of health, spirits, and intellectual exertion are requisite to its faithful discharge. Three hours of leisure, unalloyed by any alien society, and looked forward to with delight as a change and recreation, will suffice to realise in literature a larger product of what is truly genial than weeks of compulsion." Southey, who never could have known what leisure was, expressed the same idea. "My means lie in my inkstand," he would say in justification of his unremitting labours.

The foregoing sentiments will be readily endorsed by every experienced toiler in the vast field of literature. They should be deeply taken to heart by the ambitious young writer, prone to persuade himself into a conviction that the fact of being an "amateur" is a bar to his success.

In literature the word "amateur," as a term of reproach, is levelled at him who produces inferior work, not at him who is fortunately independent of the necessity of writing for a living; the so-called "professional," on the other hand, is too often a mere journeyman. The master-mind is almost invariably the product of the leisured classes. Happy, thrice happy, are those who find that the exercise of a gift in leisure hours, after the ordinary duties of life have been faithfully performed, brings in good time reward of a kind which justifies devoting to it the best energies of a lifetime.

For young writers will do well to remember that for ten years Dr. Conan Doyle devoted himself to his patients while trying his 'prentice hand at literature. Mr. George R. Sims made his mark as a writer long before he quitted the high stool in his father's counting-house in Aldersgate Street. Mr. W. S. Gilbert was originally a barrister, like Mr. Herman Merivale and Mr. Sydney Grundy. Among other modern playwrights, W. G. Wills was an artist, Mr. A. W. Pinero an actor, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones a draper's traveller, Mr. Brandon Thomas a drawing-room entertainer, the late Henry Pettitt and his colleague Paul Meritt, city clerks. Mr. Arthur Shirley was also a clerk in the city. Mr. Jerome K. Jerome was by turns an actor, a railway clearing-house clerk, a school teacher, and "a snapper up of unconsidered trifles" for the daily press, until his "Three Men in a Boat" launched him into "professional" authorship. Mr. I. Zangwill was formerly a teacher at the Jews' Free School, and "Max O'Rell" a French master at St. Paul's. "Hugh Conway" was an auctioneer's clerk at Bristol. Mr. Robert Cromie, the author of "A Plunge into Space," "The Crack of Doom," and other highly imaginative works of fiction, is still a cashier in a Belfast bank. Mr. R. W. Lowe, a prolific writer on theatrical subjects, is connected with the insurance world at Liverpool. Mr. W. J. Lawrence, the biographer of G. V. Brooke, Barry Sullivan, and other famous actors, is a com-

mercial traveller in the North of Ireland. "Geoffrey Thorne," otherwise Mr. Charles Townley, the busiest pantomime author of our day, is the district registrar for Islington; and Mr. A. B. Walkley, the dramatic critic, a clerk in the secretary's department of the General Post Office. Mr. Clement Scott was for many years a clerk at the War Office.

The list is endless. One need not hark back to "the gentle Elia," who wrote his delightful essays for the *London Magazine* while employed as a clerk at the East India House. "My printed works were my recreations," he used to say in the days of his retirement; "my real works may be found on the shelves in Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios." Rogers, the poet, was a City banker. The future Lord Beaconsfield wrote his first novel while articled to an attorney. Anthony Trollope and Mr. Edmund Yates, both of whom made large sums of money by novel-writing, enjoyed lucrative positions in the Post Office. Charles Reade and Charles Lever studied for the Bar by day, and consumed the midnight oil in writing novels. Wilkie Collins was another master of fiction who underwent his literary training side by side with the pursuit of his legal studies. Mr. Rider Haggard wrote "King Solomon's Mines" in the Temple. Professor Hoffmann (Mr. Angelo K. Lewis) is a solicitor. Sir Theodore Martin, until recently, practised as a parliamentary solicitor. Mr. Austin Dobson and Mr. Edmund

Gosse derive their income from services rendered at the offices of the Board of Trade. Mr. Spencer Walpole and Mr. Buxton Forman are in the Post Office. It is only within the last few years, too, that Sir Walter Besant relinquished his post in the Civil Service.

Indeed, considering the number of men of first-rate ability¹ who have done their best work as "amateurs," the young author will hardly fail to see how reluctant he ought to be, even if an opportunity present itself, to relinquish that secure position for the precarious "profession" of literature. The delight of describing himself an author by profession will be sadly tempered by the terrible anxieties attendant on efforts to earn a livelihood by the pen.

¹ Dean Farrar reminds us that valuable as were Matthew Arnold's contributions to literature, high as his rank will always be among English poets, exquisite as were both his prose and verse, he, like Mr. Browning, was for many years so far unrecognised that his contributions to literature added little or nothing to his income.

"When he was at Harrow he was surcharged on the income-tax, and appealed to the Commissioners, who were mostly local tradesmen and others. He told them that they had added to the income which he returned, which was not more than the £1000 a year which was all he ever received from his post of Inspector of Schools. 'Oh, but, Mr. Arnold, you are a writer,' said the Commissioners. 'Gentlemen,' he said, in his amusing tone, 'you see before you that unfortunate being, an unpopular author! My books, so far, have not added to my income.' It was not till later years that his writings materially increased his somewhat narrow resources. He used sometimes to say, at gatherings where he was received with the loudest applause, 'Gentlemen, you see before you a humble Inspector of Schools.'"

The impulse to write is not an infallible guide as to fitness for literary work. Of two authors equally eminent, the one may write because he has the *cacoethes scribendi*, the desire to express himself through the medium of the written language; the other because he is impelled by force of circumstances to deliver himself of his stores of knowledge by efforts which he detests, and which he makes perhaps under the stimulus of a tempting fee.

Results alone count. A man may be no less an author who writes under compulsion an excellent treatise on Copyright or Ostrich-Farming than he who writes—as the birds sing—because he *must*, because he has something to say. More difficult is the question, Whether a man is a truer artist for writing as an amateur what pleases him best, or selling his pen by catering to the public taste? Should he wait for a subject to come to him, or should he seek a subject? These are questions which should be answered satisfactorily before a person determines to become an author.

Some kindly personage—the editor himself, possibly—has been saying a word in season to young writers in the pages of *The Ladies' Home Journal*. It is evidently the summing up and verdict of one who knows his subject, and as it will apply to the English novice as well as to the American, we give the main points. The writer is of opinion that many young authors are led astray by reports of the

large incomes made by such writers as Mr. Kipling, Mrs. Humphry Ward, and Du Maurier. He says :

“Granting, for the sake of argument, that all the amounts which the newspapers cite have actually been paid to authors, how many Kiplings, Du Mauriers, Howellses, and Mrs. Wards have we in literature? How many can possibly attain the eminence which they have achieved? Then, too, how many years of patient toil did it take for these receivers of great literary payments to reach the position where they could command such figures for their work? Take the authors I have mentioned here as illustrations. Mr. Kipling sold his first poem for three shillings. Mr. Howells wrote all his first articles for nothing. Not only did he write them, but in order to see them in print he had to set them in type as well. Mr. Du Maurier got one pound for his first drawing. Mrs. Ward wrote for years before she could even command the interest of a publisher for her work. And when she did, and her book was published, it would not sell. Even in the few instances where large prices have been paid to authors there is a story of work represented which would appal some of our literary beginners, who only judge of these authors on their successful eminence. And I speak of these instances as few because they are so. The fact of the matter is, that not one-tenth of the entire literary profession makes sufficient money to

live upon. Not ten out of every hundred authors receive enough for their work to support them."

In fact, there are limitations everywhere, but in literature they are more than usually prominent. The writer's capacity is limited, his markets are limited, and there are often prejudices in operation against him. To quote again :

"How much material can one author sell to all these outputting channels combined? Very little, comparatively speaking. Publishers and editors will not overload themselves with too much from any one author. They want variety. And why? Because the public demands it. Just calculate how little a reading public will willingly and acceptably receive from a single writer during a year. Two novels at the utmost, half-a-dozen articles, and as many poems. Let him give more than that, and no matter how good may be his work, he is at once accused of writing too much—a fatal criticism for any writer. And even this output of fourteen pieces of literary work per year is hazardous if constantly kept up—hazardous in the sense that the public soon tires of its most popular idols and favourites. On the one hand, therefore, is a limited capacity, and on the other a contracted market. And between these the author must live—or starve. All this is not true of the lawyer or physician. A lawyer can accept as many cases as he is capable of arguing; a doctor can make as

many calls as his practice offers and his physical strength can endure."

To conclude, the writer of this very timely and sane, level-headed warning reminds the young writer of several factors not usually considered in estimating the pecuniary returns of a literary life. The newspaper statements concerning immense sums paid down for this or that literary work, he ventures to assert, are generally grossly exaggerated, and he sums up thus: "When we put aside the exceptions, and deal with the majority, the rewards of literature are meagre, painfully meagre. Good literary work will always find its market. But it is not a profitable market to the many. It pays well, but not as thousands have an idea that it does. There is a living to be had out of literature by tireless work and good writing: a fair, comfortable living. But that is all. To the vast majority literature is a glittering will-o'-the-wisp."

CLASSIFICATION OF LITERARY WORK

A classification of the books regularly put upon the market will afford the would-be author a pretty clear idea of the extensive field thrown open to his labours. Books may be classed as follows:—

Theology, Sermons, Biblical, &c.; Educational, Classical, Philological; Juvenile Works and Tales; Novels,

Tales, and other Fiction ; Law, Jurisprudence, &c. ; Political Economy, Trade and Commerce ; Arts, Sciences, and Illustrated Works ; Voyages, Travels, Geographical Research ; History, Biography, &c. ; Poetry and the Drama, Year Books and Serials in Volumes ; Medicine, Surgery, &c. ; Belles-Lettres, Essays, Monographs, &c. ; and Miscellaneous, including Pamphlets, not Sermons.

The monthly division of new works set forth in the *Bookseller* is much more exhaustive :—

Illustrated Gift Books ; Religion and Theology ; Albums, Booklets, and Text-Books ; Annuals and Serials ; Anthropology ; Archæology ; Art and Architecture ; Banking and Finance ; Biography and History ; Botany, Horticulture, and Agriculture ; Children's Books and Minor Fiction ; Classics and Translations ; Collected Works and New Editions ; Domestic Economy ; Educational ; Elementary School-Books ; Electricity and Magnetism ; Engineering and Mechanics ; Essays and Belles-Lettres ; Facetiæ ; Fiction ; Folk-Lore ; Geology, Mineralogy, and Mining ; Government Publications ; Law and Parliamentary ; Local History ; Maps and Atlases ; Mathematics ; Medical and Surgical ; Music ; Natural History ; Naval and Military ; Oriental ; Philology ; Philosophy ; Poetry and the Drama ; Politics and Questions of the Day ; Sports, Hunting, and Athletics ; Trade, Commerce, and Manufactures ; Travels, Exploration, and Adventure ; Veterinary Science, Farming, and Stock-keeping.

BOOK-WRITING

All the books embraced by the foregoing list of subjects resolve themselves into two great classes—those which instruct and those which amuse. Books intended to instruct should be the record of experience gained in the world of action or of knowledge acquired in the study. Books that amuse are in general the literary expression of such humour and insight as denotes uncommon character. But the ability to instruct or amuse does not alone constitute an author: to the knowledge that is valuable to others, to genius even, there must be added the gift of writing, the feeling for style, and an acquaintance with the technique of book-making.

This brings us to the question: To what extent can the art of writing be taught?¹ It is a debatable point. Great men have defined genius as “an infinite capacity for taking pains”; but the successful man is apt to speak in that way, out of “the pride that apes humility.”¹ The truth seems to be, that, given *Ideas*, a man must have a natural aptitude in order to work them out successfully in paint or marble, or with the pen; though a certain amount of technique can undoubtedly be taught. A man may be possessed of ideas or knowledge, but

¹ Miss Florence Marryat has recently established a school for teaching the art of the novelist.

if the literary faculty, the divine afflatus, or whatever expression we may choose to apply to this natural aptitude for working out his ideas by means of language, be altogether wanting, nothing in the world will ever make an author of him, try as he may. On the other hand, granted the possession of the all-important faculty, there is unquestionably a means of developing and improving his powers. Theophile Gautier attained a marvellous skill in the choice of words from merely studying the dictionary. The effect of wide and careful reading may be gathered from the fact that Mr. Gladstone has at his command upwards of seven thousand words, whereas an ordinary educated Englishman would find his stock exhausted after employing from two to three thousand.

Cobbett's "English Grammar," which is something much more than a grammar, should be studied by every one who makes it his aim to write good English. As a standard text-book on English composition it has never been superseded. Deacon's "Composition and Style," Bain's "English Composition and Rhetoric," Lord Kames's "Elements of Criticism," and Roget's "Thesaurus," too, are very useful works. Taylor's "English Synonyms" will be found serviceable. Should he wish to write verse, it will be necessary for him to study the rules of versification, to which even poets of genius have to conform. Poe's essays on "The Rationale of Verse"

and "The Philosophy of Composition," included in the complete edition of his works, are admirable aids to the student. A rhyming dictionary, such as Hood's or Walker's, will also be very helpful to him. If fiction be his *forte*, he cannot do better than procure for careful reading an exhaustive treatise, recently published, entitled "How to Write Fiction,"¹ and highly eulogised by so considerable an authority as Professor Edward Dowden. To the embryo local historian "How to Write the History of a Parish" may be recommended; to the would-be playwright, "How to Write a Play," by William Archer, the dramatic critic, and "Playwriting," published anonymously, but attributed to Jerome K. Jerome.

The study from these sources of the technique of his art should prepare the literary beginner for that unwearied care which is so essential to success, according to the experience of most of the best authors. George Henry Lewes made it a rule to write everything at least twice over. So did Cardinal Newman. Thomas Bailey Aldrich, the American author, makes three copies of his work before he passes it for the press, though it may only be a newspaper paragraph. One of the most successful London journalists of a past day, Albany Fonblanque, we are told by his nephew, "frequently wrote an article ten times over before it contented him, and

¹ Published at 3s. 6d. nett by Bellairs & Co., 9 Hart Street, Bloomsbury, London.

even then he rarely read it after publication without wishing to rewrite it." The purity of Washington Irving's style is largely due to the many revisions his MS. underwent before he suffered it to leave his hands. Wilkie Collins' stories always passed through his hands six times—four times in MS. and twice in print, and every copy contained fresh excisions and interpolations. The MSS. of Charles Dickens, preserved in the Forster collection at South Kensington Museum, show how assiduously he attended to the work of revision; there is scarcely a line in which he did not make some alteration. We know also that Balzac was a positive terror to the printers. Not content with revising his MS., he corrected his proofs to such an extent that it would have cost the compositors much less trouble to set up the whole work afresh. Even when the final proof was submitted, he would think nothing of blotting out an entire page and rewriting it.

It must be obvious to every one that if these authors, whose work was in demand, habitually put themselves to so much trouble, others, who have yet to establish a reputation, should consider the time well spent in making their MS. as perfect as possible.

When some one asked Robert Louis Stevenson, "What is the secret of good literature?" he answered, "Elbow grease." And then he proceeded to explain. "I can always tell when an author does

not write over and over again. The most rapid writer cannot arrange the mass of material that goes to make up a book without having it out of order here and there. Order is the basis, the charm, the end of literature. Therefore the main point is to be certain that you have everything in the proper order. Only this morning I was reading over the MS. of a scene in a story, when I found out that it was not true to human nature. I could not follow the idea. It would not join on. But after gloomily reading and re-reading it four or five times I detected the flaw. An act of one of the characters had come before something else, and rendered his subsequent conduct impossible. If in literature a man has every word and every sentence and every subject in the right order, and has no other gift, he will be a great writer. His clauses may be unmusical, his words colourless and inexpressive, and yet, if the order is perfect throughout, he will be a great writer." No man ever took greater pains with his work than Robert Louis Stevenson.

A young author should make it his undeviating rule to roughly draft out everything he writes from beginning to end. His first care should be to exhaust his subject, to say all that he has to say on it, then going over the ground a second time, set to work upon revision and correction. To write slowly and carefully is a rule good enough in theory, but it will not be found to work well in practice. Every

author who wields a facile pen must admit that he cannot suffer himself to interrupt a train of thought for the sake of amending words already committed to paper. First thoughts are often the best, however crudely they may be embodied. If he pause to pick and choose his words and round off his sentences, an entire paragraph may escape him in the process. In any case, such halting will certainly rob him of the delights of composition. It is said that Macaulay always dashed off his MS. in a species of shorthand, and afterwards re-wrote it.

ADVICE TO BEGINNERS

Let the literary beginner, then, observe the golden rule never to sit down to write until he has clearly made up his mind that he has something to say. He can afterwards settle *how* he is going to say it. Having done this, he can allow his pen to travel over the paper as fast as the thoughts flow from his mind. When the stagnation-point has been reached, he should lay his work aside, and after an interval go over it again, cutting and altering as he proceeds. There is always some introductory paragraph in a tyro's MS. which, on reflection, had better be left out; one which, in a newspaper or magazine article, restricted to certain limits, must necessarily be excised.

If, as young authors are wont to do, he inflict his

MS. upon all his acquaintance on the slightest provocation, he should impress upon them the fact that he does not solicit their praise, but their candid opinion—in a word, their criticism. Unstinted praise on the part of an author's friends is only calculated to mislead him, and lay him open to those heartburnings which ensue when his MS. is "declined with thanks" by editors and publishers. It would hardly be believed how prevalent is the vulgarity of bad spelling on the part of writers who would pass as educated persons. Such a fault could be corrected by any schoolboy, and yet young authors are found sufficiently audacious to submit work of this description to first-rate London publishers, with what result may be imagined. It is well known that Molière habitually read his work to his housekeeper. Her opinion was no doubt trustworthy, for the great French dramatist never produced anything that failed. Writing to a friend, Charles Reade once said, "I have finished my novel, 'Peg Woffington.' I don't know whether it is good or not; I wish to heaven I had a housekeeper like Molière. No author can judge his own work." In these days, however, few authors are so isolated that they cannot find some one able and willing to render them such a service.

One thing remains to be impressed upon a young writer before taking final leave of this part of our subject. Let him cultivate the habit of sitting down

to write whenever and wherever he has the opportunity, rather than when the fit seizes him in his own room, surrounded by familiar objects. He will not find it at all easy to do so at first, but training of this kind will amply repay him in the end.

For all such fancies as to one's ability to write here, and not there, by night, and not day, and a thousand and one similar fads, from which some of the greatest authors have not been exempt, are of gradual growth. Once firmly acquired, however, they can never be thrown off, but hold the individual enslaved to the end of his days. Well, therefore, it will be for an author to accustom himself, at the outset of his career, not only to write anywhere and at any time, but under any conditions. To be able to write with equal facility at home and abroad, under a variety of circumstances, is a great desideratum in this high-pressure age, when the step between easy-chair authorship and Fleet Street journalism is so short. As Dr. Johnson said, "A man can write at any time, if he will only set himself doggedly to it." The most dogged determination, however, will never enable a man to write under strange conditions unless he has undergone a special training for it.

As to the conditions favourable for working out ideas, apart from actual composition, no rule can be laid down. Every man is a law unto himself in these matters. Still, ideas are more often con-

ceived and worked out in the open air than in the study.

Whether an author elaborates his ideas in the study or in the street does not matter much, but it is very certain that elaborated they must be before he commences to write. "Nothing is more clear," says Poe in his "Philosophy of Composition," "than that every plot worth the name must be elaborated to its denouement before anything be attempted with the pen. It is only with the denouement constantly in view that we can give a plot its indispensable air of consequence or causation, by making the incidents, and especially the tone at all points, tend to the development of the intention." If this be true of a work of fiction, it is equally true in regard to every other kind of literary composition. How far the same principle applies to the construction of a poem is shown by Poe himself in his analysis of "The Raven"—a work which, as he says, "proceeded step by step to its completion with the precision and rigid consequence of a mathematical problem."

MISTAKES OF WRITERS

We have seen from the classified list on page 24 how many different kinds of books are regularly poured into the market from the printing-press. It will be well if in this place we consider whether

there be any species of book which, save under very exceptional circumstances, the unknown and inexperienced author should *not* write.

One great mistake uniformly made by writers is that they seek rather to follow in the steps of a successful author than to strike out a new path of their own. As soon as Hugh Conway made a hit with "Called Back," the air became clouded with "shilling shockers"; Fergus Hume's "The Mystery of a Hansom Cab," of which 352,000 copies were sold between 1883 and 1887, instantly set the fashion for detective stories; while the market has since been deluged with historical romances because of the success achieved by Mr. Stanley Weyman's "A Gentleman of France"; and readers have long since grown tired of weak imitations of Mr. Grant Allen's "The Woman Who Did." For a time, indeed, publishers are apt to allow the prevailing fashion to get the better of their discretion; yet it does not at all follow that, because a number of more or less well-known writers are encouraged to imitate a new style, an author wholly unknown will succeed in placing his MS. before the fashion has changed.

Let it never be forgotten that the success of the above-mentioned novels, like that of "King Solomon's Mines," "She," "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and many more, was largely due to their *novelty*. They appeared at the very time when they were called for, and established the

reputation of their authors ; but while further works of the same kind will be welcomed from the pens of the same authors, imitations of them by new writers have but little chance of acceptance. It is not too much to say that the day which witnesses the complete success of a particular style of fiction is the day when authors should *avoid* writing on the same lines, for the day is then not far distant when the cry will be for something new. Then such books as the following are almost certain to prove failures, however competent the work, and if written, should be sold for what they will fetch in ready money to some of the less wary publishers :—Lives of the old actors, short stories, manuals of politics, poetry, tours and travels, lives of undistinguished or forgotten characters, local history, essays on religion, anthologies, scientific treatises, sermons, grammars, philosophical treatises, linguistic essays, books on folk-lore and antiquities.

Again, some writers produce elaborate works on a subject of great temporary interest, never reflecting that before their book can be printed and published every newspaper and review in the three kingdoms will have thrashed the subject out *ad nauseam*. Since the demise of the author of "The Battle of Dorking," Mr. Edward Jenkins is perhaps the only man living who has made money out of a pamphlet on a well-debated subject. When the public interest in the question of proclaiming Her Majesty

the Queen Empress of India was at its height, he wrote, had printed, and published "The Blot on the Queen's Head" within the short space of twenty-four hours. Of course, his arrangements for this expeditious mode of publication would in all likelihood have fallen through, had he not previously been known to fame as the author of "Ginx's Baby."

Few things are more distressing to a publisher than to have to pronounce sentence upon a meritorious work that cannot be profitably published, because the subject it treats of is of no interest to the book-buying public. The author should learn to combine the two functions of *impressario* and artist—to plan a work on acceptable lines, and to execute it like a man of genius.

Three-fourths of the MSS. that annually find their way into the fire have been rejected because their authors, otherwise competent, have taken no pains to ascertain what degree of interest Messrs. Mudies' subscribers are likely to take in the subject treated, at the date when the work will be published. Nor is every book of sound literary workmanship judged to be marketable at the time it is offered for publication, for innumerable stories might be told of well-known works the authors of which had great difficulty in finding a publisher. To take a single example, Carlyle's "French Revolution" was declined by more than one publisher, while "Sartor

Resartus " long went the rounds of the publishers in vain.

With regard to books of humour, publishers are very chary of accepting such works from new writers; and not without reason. Strange it is, that while most people will relish a humorous story in a magazine or periodical, they are slow to spend their money on a humorous *book*. This is what the average publisher says to himself when the MS. of a humorous work comes before him, stamped with his reader's approval: "This is something quite out of the common. It may make a great hit, or it may fall dead from the press. Has there ever been a similar book published in this country which the public have taken to? I can't think of one. Nothing that has gone before enables me to gauge its chances of success. It had better be left alone." If one publisher, more enterprising than the rest, take it up at all, he does so almost in the expectation of sustaining a loss, and is agreeably surprised should he find that his faith in it has not led him astray. Mr. Jerome's "Three Men in a Boat" was refused by a certain firm because it was "frothy and unsaleable." The same author's "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow" was declined by another firm on the ground that nothing of *that* kind would go down with the public. It is now in its 140th edition.

The mistake is often made by authors of sending

out their MS. to the wrong *sort* of publisher. Concerning this error, we shall have more to say by-and-by.

As a rule, books of theatrical interest do not inspire confidence in the breast of a publisher, despite the prominence which is nowadays given to dramatic affairs by the newspaper and periodical press. The fact is that all theatre-goers are not book-buyers.

Of certain theatrical books from his own pen the present writer could a tale unfold. No publisher would look at "The Stage with the Curtain Raised," though, when it eventually came out, at the author's own risk, it went out of print in a remarkably short time. This was, however, a book with a purpose, appealing more to a class than to the general reading public. Mr. Heinemann took more than a month to weigh the chances for and against his "Roughing it on the Stage," and finally declined it. Messrs. Jarrold & Son stated that their reader's report on the work was very far from unfavourable, and they wished to be allowed to consider it a little while longer. But it came back, chastened with "regrets," like a strayed child. At the third publishers' office the MS. was more successful. Acting on the recommendation of their general editor, who had enjoyed a good laugh over it while nursing a cold at his own fireside, Messrs. Iliffe & Son took it up at once. "'Tis an ill wind," &c. But for that

lucky cold, "Roughing it on the Stage" might never have been published.

In spite of the erstwhile success of the "shilling shocker" class of literature, the young author ought to devote his attention to the books that can be published at five shillings and upwards. The "shilling" public is amply catered for already by the editors of magazines and periodicals. "But," says the young author, "you surely forget the immense travelling public which is continually depleting the railway bookstalls; *there* is a market for my paper-covered volume." What answer can be made to that argument—an argument that every publisher is so familiar with? This. The railway bookstalls are the joint property of the railway companies, and Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son, and the views of these potentates may be gleaned from the following explicit communication which was recently addressed to an author:—

"The only answer we can give . . . is that we do not engage in publishing. . . . We restrict ourselves to the sale at our bookstalls of publications in brisk demand among our customers, avoiding, so far as we can, doing anything to assist in creating a demand; and if you are able, through a recognised publishing house, to create a demand for your projected series, you will find us prepared to supply the demand that comes our way."

As with the railway bookstalls, so with the "dis-

count " bookshops; a demand must be created by author and publisher, whereupon the middlemen cheerfully tax the orders from the public!

Poetry and belles-lettres are among the most difficult books to negotiate with a publisher. Except in a few extraordinary cases, poets are not sources of revenue to their publishers. Mr. William Watson's first book of poems was cleared away by the publisher as so much waste paper. The speculative Lincolnshire bookseller who bought and published the early poems of the Tennysons must have burnt his fingers over that not very wise proceeding, though he recouped himself in after years, possibly, when the copyright became valuable. It is rare that a poem like "The Light of Asia" gladdens the heart of a publisher.

After a goodly number of short poems have appeared in high-class journals and magazines over the same writer's name, they may, and often do, find a publisher willing to issue them in a collected form, generally under the title of a longer poem printed for the first time. All Mr. Robert Buchanan's shorter poems appeared first in the magazines. Mr. J. Reddie Mallett's homely set of verses, "Hoffman's History," which attracted some attention in the pages of *Temple Bar*, have since been republished by Messrs. Bentley in book form under the amended title of "A Life's History." The vigorously dramatic poems of Susan K. Phillips, now so much

sought after by elocutionists, originally appeared in *All the Year Round*. Mr. W. Beatty-Kingston's "My Hansom Lays" were all written for *Punch*. Mr. Austin Dobson's delicate rhythmical verse invariably adorns the best English and American magazines before it is given to the world afresh in a new dress. Even Mr. Cotsford Dick's *World* verses found a publisher. But authors who succeed in finding a publisher for newly-written verse are very, very few, and the same may be said of essays and criticisms.

The essays of Mr. Andrew Lang, and the literary criticisms of Mr. Richard Le Gallienne, are not only very pleasant reading, but what is more to the point, they appeal to the class of people who buy books, and are therefore republished. Mr. Jerome's "Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow" was first published in *Home Chimes*, and the six essays that serve as literary makeweight for his book, "The Diary of a Pilgrimage" (itself a serial contribution to the *Daily Graphic*), in *Tinsley's Magazine*, another defunct monthly. Mr. G. S. Street's "The Autobiography of a Boy" appeared serially in the *National Observer*. Every one knows that the genius of Mr. J. M. Barrie was first recognised by the readers of his essays and sketches in the *St. James's Gazette*. Nor must it be forgotten that the late Walter Pater's critical essays and Richard Jefferies' papers on country life received the stamp

of public approval in the magazines. Indeed, by far the greater proportion of our modern literature which comes under the head of poetry and belles-lettres is originally set before the world in the pages of a newspaper or periodical.

From the foregoing our young author can hardly fail to understand that in no case should he offer a volume of original essays to a publisher, but should try to get them accepted piecemeal by magazine editors. Afterwards, when he has them in print, he may be fortunate enough to induce a literary expert like Professor Saintsbury, Dr. Robertson Nicoll, Professor Dowden, or Mr. Edmund Gosse to pass a critical opinion on his work. Needless to add, the slightest word of recommendation from one of these gentlemen would have great weight with a publisher.

As to volumes of short stories—Mr. Kipling notwithstanding¹—there is no market for them, unless an author has already scored a success with a novel. In such an event, anything bearing his name will be snapped up by the book trade, but not otherwise. The observations made above touching essays and poetry apply with greater force to short stories. There is in these days ample scope for short story writing in newspapers, magazines, and periodicals,

¹ Mr. Kipling's early work was done for the proprietors of *The Pioneer* of Allahabad, who permitted him to republish a selection from their columns, without having the faintest notion that these copyrights were to become so valuable.

but in the book-market none whatever until an author has made a name for himself as a novelist, or established a reputation in the magazines for a special kind of story.¹

Next to novels and short stories, books of travel pour into publishers' offices in the greatest number. Almost every one who has spent forty days in the Holy Land, or paid a flying visit to the Continent, imagines there is the making of a valuable book out of his diaries, despite the satire of Mr. Kipling's "Pagett, M.P." It never occurs to him that he has only been following in the beaten track of the compilers of the guide-books. It is the comparatively untrodden paths of the world that offer subjects for books of travel; but here the traveller should be in a position to deal exhaustively with the history, language, religion, mythology, flora and fauna of the country explored. Mr. Stanley's "Darkest Africa," Colonel Sir W. Butler's "The Great Lone Land," and Dr. Nansen's "The First Crossing of Greenland" and "Farthest North" are representative works of travel of the highest importance, on account of the new ground they cover. "An Englishman in Paris," "Things Japanese," and "Chinese Characteristics" were written by persons long resident in the countries described. Books of personal

¹ Mr. Rudyard Kipling is identified with Indian life, Mrs. Stannard ("John Strange Winter") with cavalry life, Mr. G. R. Sims with London life (of a sort), while Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. Machen, and others are all *specialists* in fiction.

adventure, like Miss Dowie's "A Girl in the Karpathians" and Mr. R. L. Jefferson's "To Constantinople on a Bicycle," achieved a success by reason of literary qualities that would probably have ensured success for any other book they had written; and especially was this the case when Miss Olive Shreiner embodied her colonial experiences in a novel, "The Story of an African Farm." Only such popular humorists as Mark Twain, Max O'Rell, and Jerome K. Jerome enjoy the monopoly of making a book out of their observations along the beaten track, since every one expects them to have something new to say in their own peculiar style.

Coming now to works of a heavier kind, it is easy to understand that the social position of the author is all-important. Leaders in different schools of thought always have their followings. Popular preachers can usually count on their congregations; principals of colleges, "crammers," and examiners, when they write a book on their pet subject, need not go very far afield to find a market for it; while University professors naturally take precedence of less dignified authors in the various departments of history, theology, philosophy, and science.

Works of an educational character should never be attempted by persons who are not in a position to command a sale for them among students to whom they are known personally or by reputation.

Let us imagine for a moment such a one discussing the merits of his book with a publisher. Says he, "This is a subject which has occupied my mind for years. I may say that my book is the outcome of the labour of a lifetime. If you will look through it carefully, you will find that it differs from everything of the kind ever placed in the hands of a student. It cannot fail to make its way on its merits."

The publisher is by no means so enthusiastic. "My dear sir," he returns, "I am perfectly willing to believe that it is a good thing. It may be exactly as you say. But there is one point of which you seem to lose sight. Have you a reputation as a teacher? Can you guarantee a sale of, say, from three to five hundred copies among your own pupils? Could you announce yourself as the head-master of such-and-such a public school, or the principal of such and such a college? If you cannot do these things, I cannot find a use¹ for your book, however excellent it may be."

Mark now the difference when the visitor addresses the publisher as follows: "I have here a *Latin Grammar* [or as the case may be], based on

¹ It is too often forgotten by authors that a publisher and his agents merely "keep shop"—they cannot proclaim the merits of their wares from the house-tops; and if they did, who would credit their statements? Newspaper advertisements are useful only to remind readers that a person whom they know or of whom they have heard has published a book. Books cannot be advertised on the scale of patent medicines.

my knowledge of the requirements of —— College, of which I am head-master. If you will give it your early consideration, I shall feel extremely obliged." Left to himself, the publisher looks casually through the MS. and decides to take it up; not upon its merits—of which he is no judge—but upon the strength of the author's reputation and position in the educational world.

With reference to politics and social reform, people who interest themselves in such subjects are probably not book-buyers to any very great extent. They are wedded to their class newspapers, and do not care to pay for the opinions of less famous men than Mr. Gladstone, Mr. John Morley, or Mr. A. J. Balfour. Authors with a partiality for these subjects may be advised to seek admission to the higher class journals and reviews—unless they have objects in view which can be served by publishing at their own expense.

Looking down the list on page 24, one cannot fail to note the large proportion of what may be termed "technical" books. The extent and the uses of such may not occur to the average person afflicted with a longing for literary fame, and asking himself what kind of book he should set himself to write. Just as there are trade journals for almost every calling under the sun, so there is generally an opening for books appealing to a particular *clientèle*. Many a man who toils unsuccessfully at poetry or

criticism, plays or politics, might become a successful author—up to a certain point—by writing a treatise on shoeing horses, stuffing birds, cycling, or anything else which he thoroughly understands. Such works, if written by experts, undoubtedly find a remunerative sale, for they are tools of trade, and therefore indispensable to all who are commercially interested in the subject treated of. A work like “Building Construction” yields larger profits during the period of copyright than the majority of popular novels. A publisher recently issued a book entitled “Plastering, Plain and Decorative,” and at once sold 1200 copies. How many novels achieve even half that circulation? The explanation was that “it is the first comprehensive work on its subject; its author, Mr. William Millar, is a master of his craft, having been a plasterer all his life, and being actually descended through a long line of plasterers. All the mysteries of the art are here, and already we have orders for 1200 copies.”

PREPARATION OF MANUSCRIPTS

A few words on the preparation of an author's MS. may here find a place. The colour and size of the paper is, as a rule, immaterial, but some periodicals refuse to consider MS. written on blue or other coloured paper. Sufficient space should be left between the lines to enable slight corrections

to be made easily. The provision of a good margin at the left-hand edge of the paper is appreciated when some forgotten sentence has to be interpolated in the text. Care should be taken to number the leaves consecutively, and to fasten them together at the top left-hand corner. It is scarcely necessary to insist here that *all* MS. should be written on one side of the paper only. The reason is, that when a MS. has to be set up in type within a given time (as, for example, in a newspaper office), the master-printer, before giving out the "copy" to the compositors, cuts the sheets across into numbered strips—a proceeding which admits of all hands being employed upon it at once. Where *italics* are to be used in the author's text, a single line should be drawn under the word or words; for SMALL CAPITALS, two lines; and for LARGE CAPITALS, three lines. Of course, these directions need not be followed in the author's rough draft of his work; but the fair transcription which he sends to the publisher, free from corrections and interlineations, ought certainly to exhibit his acquaintance with these rules. Writers should, however, refrain from indulging in the unnecessary use of italic and capital letters; it is considered one of the marks of the worst class of "amateurs."

Literary beginners may not be aware that the Preface of a book should always be written *last*. Between a Preface and an Introduction, properly so called, there is a very wide difference. In

his Preface the author "buttonholes" the reader for a moment, and in a friendly way gives him a hint of the treat in store for him! The Introduction usually unfolds the plan and scope of the work. A book may have a Preface and an Introduction;¹ they are two things wholly distinct. So, too, a book may have an analytical list of Contents and an exhaustive Index. Most books, apart from fiction, are the better for a good Index; in many, indeed, an Index is essential.² This part of the author's work is not called for by the publisher until the whole of the work has been put into type, but an additional sheet or two, headed "Index," with "will be supplied" in parentheses, should be added to his MS. The compilation of the Index can be leisurely proceeded with from the proofs as they come to hand. The proper method of compiling an index is to write out each item on a separate card or slip of stout paper. The cards or slips are then sorted out in strictly alphabetical order, and sent on to the publisher numbered and tied up in a bundle. This saves the trouble of transcription on MS. paper.

Wherever possible, the final copy of an author's MS. should be *typewritten*. There is much virtue in

¹ Dr. Johnson plumed himself on his Prefaces and Introductions. He was wont to say that *two* things he could do well, viz., state how a book ought to be written, and why it was impossible so to write it.

² Authors have been known to declare that "index-making is not an author's business." That cry proceeds from the class of man that counts his gains at so much per thousand words, and whose avocation should have been that of a handicraftsman.

a typewriter. Though it may be an expensive thing to buy, it is certainly not a troublesome thing to master, and will soon repay a person who wishes to earn money by writing. If the exclusive possession of a machine be beyond his means, typewriting by professional hands is now so cheap that the laborious transcription of his MS. might well be spared. That a typed copy of a work will have a much better chance of receiving careful attention in a publisher's office than a MS. is certain.

If, however, for any reason, typing be altogether out of the question, a neatly-written MS., in a hand neither too large nor too small, is the only admissible substitute. Publishers have too much regard for their readers' time to expect them to wade through an illegible scrawl. Moreover, it is quite impossible for any reader to sum up the *literary* merits of a MS. which he cannot easily make out, or which, though written in a legible hand, is disfigured by wholesale erasures, corrections, and interlineations. It is undoubtedly to an author's interests to have his MS. resemble as nearly as possible copy-book writing, no matter at what cost of time and patience.¹ Care should also be taken that the letter he sends with his MS. is turned out to correspond,

¹ M. Sardou's first play, "La Taverne des Etudiants," was written so beautifully that a great actress, Mdle. Berangère, happening to cast her eye over it in the manager's room at the Odeon, begged to be allowed to take it home for perusal. The result was acceptance and production.

for by that a publisher may not unreasonably gauge the legibility of the MS. itself. If that be carelessly dashed off, he may not even undo the packet.

A MS. should never be rolled; it should be doubled just once, or, better still, sent out flat. For *Chapman's Magazine*, and others, copy *must* be packed flat. And let him not forget to write his name and address on the MS. This is most important.

A very excellent plan, adopted by an author of many years' experience, is to write his name and address, and affix the necessary postage-stamps on the reverse side of the wrapper in which he sends out his MS., for its return by post in the same wrapper in case of rejection; but the same author somewhat cancels the favourable impression created by this business-like forethought by writing the publisher long explanatory and apologetic letters. In any case, postage-stamps should always be enclosed in a MS. sent out, unless directions are given to return the MS. by carrier. The publisher cannot be expected to defray the cost of returning hundreds of rejected works. The enclosure of a stamped, directed post-card would generally ensure an acknowledgment of the receipt of the MS.,¹ though publishers

¹ The following circular is sent to authors by a well-known London firm: "Mr. —, while exercising a care which hitherto has proved sufficient for the purpose, is unable to render himself legally responsible for damage to or loss of MSS. submitted to him by authors. Owners of valuable MSS. should insure their property or keep a duplicate copy. Postage-stamps should always accompany MSS. for their return, if unsuitable, by Parcel Post."

invariably protect themselves from responsibility in case of loss by fire or mischance. Fire offices absolutely refuse to insure MSS., alleging that they have "no value." Authors cannot be too careful to keep a duplicate of everything they write for the press.

THE CHOICE OF A PUBLISHER

The MS. or the typewritten copy of his work being ready, the great question arises, "Who is the most suitable publisher to whom to submit it?" The answer of course is, "It all depends on the nature of the work." There can be few young authors who do not read. The books they read have probably influenced their work, therefore the publishers of their favourite books are probably the publishers to whom their MS. should be submitted. If his work be a novel, the field open to the author is a large one. More than half the publishers have a certain proportion of novels on their "list"; some publish scarcely anything else. "Sexual" fiction should not be sent to the S.P.C.K., nor a temperance story to Mr. Heinemann or Mr. John Lane. *Verb. sat.*

A consultation of publishers' catalogues and advertisements, or of the title-pages of recent books in a public library, should be the first care of an author in search of a publisher. Supposing him to be a schoolmaster, with a decided bent for a particular branch of his profession, he will probably have had

occasion to purchase the books of certain publishers. These publishers should be first approached. Yet, recollecting what has already been said in these pages, viz., that the chief value of an educational work, from the publisher's standpoint, lies in the acknowledged position of its author in the scholastic world, it will be useless for him to approach, say Messrs. Longmans or Messrs. Macmillan, if he has *only* his MS. to recommend him. This being the case, two courses are open to the unknown author. He must either interest, first of all, public-school teachers, professors, and examiners in his work, and thereby bring a little influence to bear upon the magnates of "the Row," or else he must go to an exclusively educational publisher whose "list" is not composed chiefly of works by dignitaries of the Church. Many of the school text-books issued by a purely scholastic house do not bear their authors' names; so if an author be not too eager for immediate fame, he may find an opening for his first work in this direction.

Historical, philological, ethnological, or archæological works can only be properly dealt with by a high-class publisher; and it goes without saying that an author with a taste for these subjects, yet unrecommended by University honours, will find very great difficulty in getting his first work published. Still, his case is not absolutely hopeless. That such an author's initial work of this kind does in the end reach the goal of its wanderings is

evidenced by the present writer's "Names, and their Meaning," which was taken up by Mr. Fisher Unwin after twelve other publishers had refused it. It passed into a third edition within a few months, and was then followed (at the instance of the publisher) by a supplementary volume, "More About Names."

The golden rule for the young author is to find a publisher who is in direct sympathy with the peculiar character of his work. A day spent in a good library of *recent* publications, such as the newly-established Library Bureau at No. 10 Bloomsbury Street, or in the study of the advertisement columns of the *Athenæum*, the *Spectator*—or whatever his favourite literary journal may be—will yield more satisfactory results than listening to the advice of friends who are often more ignorant on the subject than himself.

Taking at random an issue of the *Times*, the *Athenæum*, and the *Guardian*, we find the addresses of the following publishers:—

PUBLISHERS IN 1897

ALLEN, GEORGE, Charing Cross Road, London.

ARNOLD, EDWARD, Bedford Street, Covent Garden, London.

ARROWSMITH, J. W., Bristol.

BELL, GEORGE, & SONS, York Street, Covent Garden, London.

- BENTLEY, RICHARD, & SON, New Burlington Street,
London.
- BLACK, A. & C., Soho Square, London.
- BLACKIE & SON, LTD., Old Bailey, London.
- BLACKWOOD, WILLIAM, & SONS, Edinburgh.
- BLISS, SANDS, & CO., 12 Burleigh Street, Strand, London.
- BOWDEN, JAMES, Henrietta Street, London.
- CASELL & CO., LTD., Belle Sauvage Yard, Ludgate Hill,
London.
- CHAPMAN & HALL, LTD., Henrietta Street, London.
- CHATTO & WINDUS, St. Martin's Lane, London.
- CLARENDON PRESS, Amen Corner, London.
- CONSTABLE & CO., 2 Whitehall Gardens, London.
- DENT, J. M., & CO., 69 Great Eastern Street, London,
E.C.
- DOUGLAS, DAVID, Edinburgh.
- DOWNEY & CO., LTD., York Street, Covent Garden,
London.
- GARDNER, DARTON, & CO., 3 Paternoster Buildings,
London.
- GRIFFIN & CO., LTD., Exeter Street, Strand, London.
- GRIFFITH, FARRAN, BROWNE, & CO., LTD., 35 Bow Street,
London.
- HEINEMANN, WILLIAM, 21 Bedford Street, London.
- HODDER & STOUGHTON, 27 Paternoster Row, London.
- HURST & BLACKETT, LTD., Great Marlborough Street,
London.
- HUTCHINSON & CO., Paternoster Square, London.
- INNES, A. D., & CO., 31 Bedford Street, London.
- ISBISTER & CO., LTD., Tavistock Street, London.
- JARROLD & SONS, Warwick Lane, London.
- LANE, JOHN, Vigo Street, London.
- LAWRENCE & BULLEN, LTD., Henrietta Street, London.
- LOCKWOOD, CROSBY, & SON, Stationers' Hall Court,
London.
- LONGMANS, GREEN, & CO., Paternoster Row, London.
- LOW, SAMPSON, MARSTON, & CO., LTD., Fetter Lane,
London.
- MACMILLAN & CO., LTD., St. Martin's Street, London.
- MACQUEEN, JOHN, Hastings House, Norfolk Street, London.

- METHUEN & Co., 36 Essex Street, Strand, London.
 MURRAY, JOHN, Albemarle Street, London.
 NELSON & SONS, Paternoster Row, London.
 NIMMO, JOHN, King William Street, Strand, London.
 NISBET & Co., Berners Street, London.
 NOVELLO, EWER, & Co., Berners Street, London.
 NUTT, DAVID, Strand, London.
 OLIPHANT, ANDERSON, & FERRIER, Edinburgh.
 OSGOOD, M'ILVAINE, & Co., Albemarle Street, London.
 PAUL, KEGAN, TRENCH, TRÜBNER, & Co., LTD., Charing
 Cross Road, London.
 REDWAY, GEORGE, Hart Street, Bloomsbury, London.
 RICHARDS, GRANT, Henrietta Street, London.
 RIVINGTON & Co., King Street, Covent Garden, London.
 ROUTLEDGE, GEORGE, & SONS, Broadway, Ludgate Hill,
 London.
 SCOTT, WALTER, LTD., Paternoster Square, London.
 SEELEY & Co., LTD., Great Russell Street, London.
 SKEFFINGTON & Co., 163 Piccadilly, London.
 SMITH, ELDER, & Co., Waterloo Place, London.
 SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE, Nor-
 thumberland Avenue, London.
 STOCK, ELIOT, 62 Paternoster Row, London.
 SWAN SONNENSCHEN & Co., Paternoster Square, London.
 UNWIN, FISHER T., Paternoster Square, London.
 WARD, LOCK, & Co., LTD., Salisbury Square, London.
 WARNE, FREDERICK, & Co., Bedford Street, Covent Garden,
 London.
 WHITE, F. V., & Co., Bedford Street, London.

An author cannot be too careful in his choice of a publisher. Assuming publishers to be all equally stable, and honourable as men of business, there is just the same subtle difference between them as exists between the Lyceum and the Gaiety, Exeter Hall and the Crystal Palace, the Royal Albert Hall

and the Alhambra as places of public resort. A book may derive prestige from the imprint of one publisher, and be quite discredited by the imprint of another house in the same street.

A young author can scarcely do better than to send for a publisher's list, and observe whether the names of authors of position figure in it, and whether as a whole the books issued by the firm are such as he would himself care to buy. Of two houses considered equally suitable, he should choose the one that appears to be the most active and enterprising; and this will frequently be a young house. When a publishing house has a list of from a thousand to two thousand works it is obvious that it can pay but little attention to each book. Indeed, in such cases the usual course is for the partners to say "Good-bye" to the new book as soon as the binding is approved and the price of publication settled. It is from that moment handed over to the clerks, while the partners turn their attention to the next venture. A younger house, on the other hand, is often *plus royaliste que le roi* in regard to a new book, and watches its career from day to day. How far the prestige of an old-established firm compensates for lack of energy is a delicate question which every author will be called upon to decide for himself, according to the circumstances of the case. It is also to be remembered that the expenses of a large house are enormous, and that every book must pay

its share of the £10,000 to £20,000 a year which are needed for "establishment charges."

Assuming that the author has selected his publisher, the next question is, "How should he proceed to introduce his MS.?" As a rule, it is inadvisable for an unknown writer to address a publisher on the subject of his MS. before sending it in. Such a proceeding only evokes a courteous reply to the effect that the publisher's hands are too full to enable him to consider any further MSS. "at present"; the truth being that, as his correspondent is unknown, he does not consider the work offered worth the trouble of a lengthy correspondence. Even established writers do not find much good to come of this preliminary skirmishing—unless, indeed, one or other of their previous books has gone into several editions, which entirely alters the case.

Still less should a young author force his way into a publisher's sanctum, armed with his MS. He may succeed—not always—in obtaining an interview; but an unfavourable impression is often formed of him and his work from his volubility and apparent self-conceit. Authors who needlessly take up a publisher's valuable time are not blessed; on the contrary, they are shunned as bores. In the most favourable circumstances they can only be asked to leave their MS., which amounts to the very same thing as if they had delivered it to an assistant in the outer office.

The prudent author, fully alive to his own interests, would be well advised to send his MS. *by registered post*. At the same time he should despatch a brief, neatly-written, business-like advice note, after this style:—

“DEAR SIR (or SIRs),—I venture to send you by to-day’s registered Book-post, the MS. (*or type-written copy*) of a work (or novel) entitled . . . and containing about — thousand words; and shall feel extremely obliged if you will give the same your attention with a view to publication.—I remain, &c.”

Not another word is necessary. A long letter only prepares the publisher for a MS. more remarkable for verbosity than charm. Such supplementary information as, “I am the author of . . .”; or “My former work . . . published by . . . has had a large sale,” should be carefully avoided; because if the publisher has never heard of it,¹ he will be disposed to regard its author as a proved failure, particularly if the publisher of that former work² be a man of no great repute. If it be worth while to draw attention

¹ It must be remembered that “the trade” has ways and means of finding out the history of all modern books, and *taradiddles* are best avoided. A young writer introduced himself and his MS. by stating that he required the *usual* (!) twenty per cent. royalty. Needless to say, his MS. was returned unopened.

² References to former publishers should be made with caution. There is always a *prima-facie* case against the author who admits that he is seeking a fresh publisher.

to a former work at all, the title-page of the author's MS. is the proper place for it, and then it should be in keeping with the character of the work submitted. "Harold's Wooing," a novel, by the Author of "Poems, Grave and Gay"; and "Travels in the Caucasus," by the Author of "Agamemnon, a Tragedy," betray inconsistencies of which no experienced writer would be guilty. Two other things to be borne in mind are: 1, that the writer's full name and address should appear in a conspicuous place upon the MS.; 2, that the title of the MS. should be mentioned in every letter addressed to the publisher. The neglect of these rules causes more trouble in a publisher's office than the guileless author, unaccustomed to business routine, can picture to himself.

PUBLISHERS AND THEIR WAYS

As the publisher is, necessarily, very much *en evidence* in these pages, we shall do well to make clear to ourselves, before proceeding further, what a publisher really is.

A publisher is one who announces, proclaims, or advertises something; one who makes a thing widely known. Whether he imparts his information to the public by word of mouth, or by a written or printed proclamation, does not matter in the least; in either case he is a publisher, agreeably to the strict

definition of the term. The heralds and the town-criers were the earliest publishers. Next came the gutter-poets and ballad-singers who, having collected crowds around them by their vocalisation, sold printed copies of their effusions at a penny each. In this way the publisher first became a trafficker in printed wares freely bought by the public. Street broadsides, dying speeches, and song-sheets in the form of "three yards a penny," popularised by the Catnach Press, were the staple commodities dealt in by the "publisher" long after authors of a more respectable stamp circulated their works through the medium of the printer or the bookseller. In Dr. Johnson's time a recognised author or a hack-writer had necessarily to open up negotiations with a "bookseller." As the trade in literature grew a division of labour became necessary, and the modern publisher is one who distributes or circulates the productions of the printing-press through the bookseller and librarian. Indeed, anything capable of being multiplied by the printing-press calls for the services of a publisher as wholesale distributor: such as prints, cleographs, chromographs, Christmas, New Year, and birthday cards, maps, charts, drawing and copy books, music, song-sheets, a newspaper, magazine, or periodical. In our own day, however, a publisher *par excellence* is the publisher of books. If he be a newspaper or music publisher, or a map or print publisher, he expressly so describes himself.

Publishers may be divided into three distinct classes. They are the manufacturing or popular publisher, the editorial publisher, and the speculative or "up-to-date" publisher.

Let us consider, first of all, the manufacturing publisher. A man who has had many years' experience of the book trade, perhaps as a publisher's traveller, knows that certain kinds of books are always steadily in demand. These consist for the most part of works of which the copyright has expired; illustrated editions of the poets; popular works of Continental and Transatlantic origin; children's story-books; compilations of interesting facts, or elegant extracts from standard authors; popular readings and recitations, handy books of reference, cookery books, ready-reckoners, and other useful manuals, with now and again a "shilling shocker" from the pen of a well-known author. Consequently, when he goes into business for himself as a publisher, he is in no difficulty to make up what is called a "list." Non-copyright works he is free to draw upon to any extent he chooses; for the rest, they are commissions which he entrusts to writers experienced in the art of bookmaking. Such a publisher usually makes up his mind early in each year what he intends to issue during the autumn season; and though MSS. may pour in upon him from day to day, he rarely indulges the temptation to bring out an original

work. This is the kind of publisher who systematically declines books which afterwards make the fortune of their authors. And those authors do not forget to make the fact known, as affording another instance of the commercial short-sightedness for which the publishing fraternity are noted. Yet, after all, this class of publisher, having laid down certain lines for himself, cannot be blamed for his reluctance to make a new departure, and take a leap in the dark. He would run a double risk of losing his money, for no one can foretell the success of a book by an unknown writer; and, indeed, the chances are that in the hands of the manufacturing publisher, who rarely advertises and whose books are seldom noticed by the press, an original work would entirely miss its market.

The business of the editorial publisher is just as exclusive in the opposite direction. Non-copyright and popular books he eschews altogether. The class of book-buyer he caters for is essentially the best. He is the descendant of the original "bookseller" of a century gone by, and his aim is to uphold the worthiest traditions of the house he rules over. A prince among publishers and a large advertiser, reviewers and the trade hold him in great respect, while authors have every reason to feel honoured when he elects to enter into business relations with them. His list is a long one, because his business is old-established. The

new books he puts into the market are such as are calculated to yield him ultimately a substantial return for his outlay. His guiding principle is to publish a book that will "live," and the stock and plant of which will not deteriorate. He is a keen judge of literature, and despises the author who avowedly pursues literature for a livelihood. He does not run big risks, and is not a giver of sensational sums for copyrights; but the books on which his imprint is placed will probably outlive the majority of other books that are published in our time. He will from time to time plan an encyclopædia, a series of guide-books, a Badminton library, or a big dictionary, and enlist as his assistants the most distinguished authorities on the subjects dealt with. He is the publisher, in fact, whom Mr. Andrew Lang has always in mind, and whom Sir Walter Besant systematically ignores, when these eminent writers descant upon the relations of author and publisher, and illustrate afresh the fable of the shield of two colours. One can imagine, then, that with such a publisher a third-rate author has no chance of acceptance, and a new writer very little, unless strongly recommended by an author of recognised position.

The speculative publisher is pre-eminently "up-to-date." His policy is as liberal as that of the editorial publisher is conservative. Having no traditions to uphold—he is rarely a trained pub-

lisher and often a mere gambler in the copyrights of "star" authors—he is prepared to publish anything over which he thinks he can make money. Generally accessible, so long as his visitor keeps strictly to business, he is open to consider suggestions from all and sundry likely to result in new ventures. He it is who pounces down on the latest successful novelist, and makes him a bid for a work as yet existing only in the imagination. "I can offer you a thousand pounds for the book rights of your story now running in the *Illustrated London News*," he writes, almost before the first instalment of the story is in the hands of the public. "You are too late," the author replies; "I have already assigned it to Messrs. Dash." "In that case," says the publisher, "I am willing to secure your next year's novel on the same terms." "Very sorry," writes the author, "but I have just accepted fifteen hundred pounds for it from Mr. Blank." "Oh, very well," says the publisher, returning to the charge; "consider me good for two thousand pounds for your novel of the year following. Meantime, if you have any short stories by you, I shall be happy to publish them on a ten per cent. royalty."

This is how he gets the "star" authors of the day on his list. His business is already made for him. It is merely a question of getting a quick return for the capital invested in the purchase of copyright

and cost of production. He will often exploit new authors, provided their works contain the elements of immediate success. When a MS. has been approved by his reader, he only asks himself, "Is there any money in it?" Speaking generally, the terms which he offers for an author's first book are such that he cannot lose very much by it at the worst; but if it should prove a success, his gains will be considerable.

These three marked types will be generally recognised by those who have had much to do with the fraternity of publishers, but of course it will often be found that they combine more or less in a single house. When publishers have had much the same training and experience as regards a certain stamp of book, the verdict of one of them is as the verdict of all.

There is another kind of publisher who has to be reckoned with. He is known in the trade as a "publisher on commission." Rightly comprehended, he is not a "publisher on commission" at all, but he is allowed the title by courtesy, and from the peculiar methods he pursues, thrives for a time upon the innocence of those whom he numbers among his "clients." His business is hardly a legitimate one, because the books he publishes are known to be paid for by their authors as a last resource. The writers who figure on his list are generally novelists whose work has been "weighed in the balance and found

wanting." Inviting by public advertisement all and sundry to send in their MSS., he offers to publish authors' works on the most advantageous terms. Such a publisher never declines a MS. on the ground of unsuitability ; his reader's report is always favourable. After some beating about the bush, he comes to the statement that "We shall be happy to publish your work for *so many pounds*. You will be entitled to receive *so many* copies free of charge, and such additional copies as you may desire at half the published price. At the expiration of *so many* months from the date of publication, a statement of accounts will be furnished, and the profits derived from sales divided between author and publisher." Not a word is said about the copyright of the book, which, under the circumstances, ought in all fairness to belong to the author. Moreover, such profits as *may* arise out of the sale of the book—so far as the author's share is concerned—will invariably be swamped by the alleged costs of advertising it. The guileless author thus mulcted never admits to his friends and acquaintances that he is defraying the costs of publication himself. His invariable story is that "we are sharing in the venture." To do him justice, he has not the remotest idea that the publisher incurs no risk, and is making a handsome profit into the bargain.

Sir Walter Besant has on several occasions made a sweeping denunciation of these "publishers on commission"; the following extract from an article

contributed by him to a girl's magazine is perhaps the mildest.

Speaking of the would-be young lady novelist, he says :—

“She will begin by sending her MS. to the best houses, one after the other. She will undergo, from each house in succession, the bitterness of disappointment in the rejection of her work, without explanation of the reasons for the rejection; she will descend to the second and the third-rate houses, until she falls into the clutches of one who will propose to publish the novel on condition of her paying the costs—or a half or three-fourths of the costs—of publication. Here, as the boys say, the fun begins. The author agrees to pay the whole, or the greater part of the cost of production; the publisher who brings out a book under these conditions does so with the intention of making a profit by cheating in his statement of the cost; nobody buys any copies, and the reviewers, very justly, load the writer with ridicule. What joy! what happiness! what pride to join the band of novelists whom nobody buys, nobody reads, and whom reviewers rejoice to ‘slate’!”

In another part of his article, Sir Walter Besant alludes to these illegitimate publishers as “sharks who try to lure the author on by holding out false hopes of profit, into paying for the production of a work which has not, and cannot have, the slightest

chance of success." And again, "There are some publishers whose names alone, to those who know the secrets of publishing, condemn a book."

The publishers who systematically trade on the gullibility of disappointed authors have happily a very brief career, and a few discreet inquiries among the booksellers will enable the young author to avoid them. Yet all publishers are more or less willing to publish books at their authors' sole or partial risk. Literary amateurs of rank and fashion are wise enough in their generation to see that a good publisher's name is an excellent advertisement for an author, and so take care to get their work introduced to the public under the most favourable auspices. They do not look for a large sale; but they do love to pose before the world as if the publisher had paid them a high price for their book. Authors of this stamp are not too particular about the cost of the reputation they set such store by. They can well afford to pay for their hobby, and a publisher would be more than human were he to let them off too cheaply. If, while lending his name to it, he gives his time and trouble to the production of a dainty book of poems, or an illustrated book of travel, interesting only to the author's limited circle of acquaintances, he is justly entitled to make a profit out of the transaction. On the other hand, where the book will bring *kudos* to his house, the margin he allows himself is most reasonable. In

many cases, his only advantage lies in the discounts he obtains from the paper merchant, the printer, and the bookbinder for prompt payment. We shall have something more to say on the subject of publication at an author's sole risk when we come to discuss the terms usually offered by a publisher for a work accepted on its own merits. It will then be seen that what is called the "share profits" system is a very different thing from that upon which the "publisher on commission" regularly trades.

THE PUBLISHER'S READER

A few words now on the Publisher's Reader and his very responsible position. According to the size of the house, it employs one, two, or more readers. Most of the older houses have, independently of the reader or readers, what is called a "literary adviser," usually an author of high standing, whose word is accepted as final by the publisher. In the case of a house largely devoted to fiction, the literary adviser is generally a well-known novelist. Mr. George Meredith takes pride in the fact that he "discovered" Mr. Thomas Hardy; while to Mr. James Payn is due the credit of having introduced Mr. F. Anstey to fame.¹

¹ Mr. Payn will, I am sure, forgive me for introducing the following "excellent jest." The anecdote speaks well for the estimation in which he was held by his employer :—

"A paragraph appeared in one of the papers," says Mr. Payn, "asserting in round terms that I had had the stupidity to refuse

Or the reader may be a well-read scholar, competent to form an opinion on works of every description. A new publisher may, for a time at least, act as his own reader, being assisted in this work by his friends. He may perhaps hand over a novel to his wife or grown-up daughters; but if something unusual falls in his way, he will be almost certain to send it to an expert whose judgment he respects. So that an author need not be surprised if his MS. is posted off to Dr. So-and-so, or Professor So-and-so, who resides in his own parish. In all such cases, however, the MS. undergoes a preliminary "tasting" in the publisher's office. If it is obviously worthless, or illegibly

'John Inglesant.' I was extremely indignant at the libel, as I considered it, and I showed it to my chief when he happened to come into my room.

"Look here," I said, "what these fellows are saying! Did you ever see anything so infamous? I can't stand it! I shall write and contradict it!"

"I don't think I would trouble to do that," was the soothing reply. "What does it matter? They will say anything, you know."

"Oh, but I really must!" I said. "It's altogether beyond a joke. I shall write to the man and give him a piece of my mind."

"I don't think I would if I were you," persisted my chief.

"Why not?" I demanded.

"Because—well, because you *did* refuse 'John Inglesant,' you know."

"I did nothing of the kind," I protested. "Refuse 'John Inglesant'! I refuse 'John Inglesant'! I never heard of such a thing!"

"Let's have up the letter-book," was the mild suggestion.

"So the letter-book was brought," concludes Mr. Payn, with a delicious mixture of ruefulness and enjoyment, "and there it was in black and white! I had refused 'John Inglesant,' and my publisher had never said a word of it to me. Wasn't it good of him?"

written merely, the literary adviser or the expert never sees it at all; it is summarily declined.

When a MS. has been placed in the hands of the official reader, the latter is expected to furnish his employer with a full report upon it. This report is carefully weighed, and whether the MS. be accepted or no, it is filed for future reference. It therefore behoves the reader to prepare his report with due caution, for in the event of a rejected work proving a great success in the hands of another publisher, the first reader's report might entail the loss of his appointment. With the commercial considerations affecting the work submitted, the reader has nothing to do: his business is simply to report on the literary or scientific merits of the MS., as he finds it.

IN THE PUBLISHER'S PARLOUR

With these broad lines of the publisher's business before us, we will imagine a popular novelist sending in a MS., with a modest hint that he would like a certain sum down on account of royalties. "Dear Mr. A.," writes the publisher by return of post, "I shall be most happy to publish your novel, on the same terms as before, and herewith enclose cheque for the sum you name." This concludes the business. The MS. is handed over to the printers, a few preliminary paragraphs are sent round to the newspapers; then the publisher sets out to subscribe the book to

the trade. He goes to the wholesale agents in Paternoster Row. Says he, "I have a new novel in the press by Mr. A. You've seen the announcements, of course? How many copies do you think of subscribing for?" A large number is stated, and noted in his pocket-book. With the same story he proceeds to Messrs. W. H. Smith & Son, to Mudie's Library, to a few of the more pushing booksellers about town, and to Mr. Stoneham, in the City. The first edition is virtually exhausted before the book has been printed off, because all these tradesmen are ready to pin their faith to the latest work of a popular author.

Take now the case of an author who does not happen to be a popular novelist. *His* MS. is sent in without a word about money, but with a simple request that it shall be attentively considered. It is passed on to the reader in the usual course. Many days, many weeks, sometimes even months, elapse before he is favoured with a communication. What the publisher really thinks of his MS., if it be returned, he never learns; if, on the contrary, he be invited to call the first time he happens to be in town, he will be made wise on the subject. In the latter case, the publisher has probably exercised his mind a great deal over it, assuming that his reader's report is favourable. "The work," says the reader, in summing up, "is far above the average merit; still, it is not marked by genius or extraordinary

originality." Or the report may state that "so original in character is the MS. in question that it will either prove a great success or a dead failure." The public taste in these matters is so very capricious that a publisher can never foretell the issue of his venture with something new and strange by an unknown writer. On the other hand, there are so many novels of the ordinary sort that such a work, from the pen of an author of no particular eminence, will neither be stocked by the booksellers nor asked for at the libraries, unless, as in the case of "A Man and a Woman," by Stanley Waterloo, a hundred and fifty pounds be spent in advertising it.

This brings us again to our young friend who, having cast his MS. on the waters, expects it to come back after many days. It is not wise for him to be too hasty in instituting inquiries after its fate. If, on sending it out, he took the precaution to *register* the book-packet, it cannot possibly have miscarried in the post, and he may be assured that the publisher will communicate with him if a favourable decision has been arrived at. A month or six weeks should be allowed to elapse before inquiry be made. Over-anxiety on the part of the author only causes the publisher to hurry up his reader, with a result that the work does not receive that careful attention which it is the writer's interest to ensure. Or the inquiry may arrive at the very time when, with the reader's report before him,

the publisher is making up his mind whether to accept or decline it, or what terms he can propose ; and a hasty expression in the letter of inquiry may entail the instant rejection of a meritorious work.

The author who troubles a publisher the least is the one who is most respected ; indeed, some authors of average ability prosper largely through their affability. The author whose MS. finds its way home again, after he has worried the publisher with inquiries, always leaves it to be inferred that he has ruined his chances of acceptance by his importunity. But even if no such provocation has been given the publisher to decline the work, it does not follow that its ultimate rejection is due to its literary shortcomings. It may be simply unsuited to the commercial purposes of that individual publisher, or be offered at a time when trade is dull, or when he has already accepted a book on similar lines. It may be very good, but he does not consider it quite good enough to warrant risking his money over it. Good as it may be, he is doubtful whether he could sell a sufficient number of copies to make it pay. Still, there must be something in it, or he would not have detained it so long. The test of the absolute worthlessness of a MS., or of its utter unsuitability for that publisher's trade, is its speedy return.

At the same time, it is no part of a publisher's business to enter into the reasons for his rejection of a work submitted for approval. Sir Walter

Besant has ventilated the opinion that, however unpalatable the truth might be, writers who are wholly incompetent would be spared years of fruitless labour and bitter disappointment if publishers were to furnish them with a candid criticism on their rejected MSS. This is, perhaps, too much to expect of busy men; moreover, ambitious literary aspirants are proverbially the last people in the world to take criticism in good part.

As a matter of fact, publishers do sometimes enter into particulars with the author of a work that shows merit. In the main, however, they have a set form of conveying their "regrets" to the unhappy author whose work they reject. This is how they put it—each one after his own fashion:—

"We cannot see our way to undertake its publication;" "We have so many new works on our hands for the coming season that we are reluctantly compelled to decline it;" "It is not quite suited to our list;" "The public to which it appeals is somewhat limited, and we do not think we could find a ready sale for it;" "We fear in our hands it would not prove a financial success;" "Our hands are too full to permit us to entertain any more new works this season;" "Our reader's report is not sufficiently encouraging to induce us to propose terms for its publication;" or "Our literary adviser does not recommend us to undertake it."

Whether these expressions of regret are tendered on a lithographed circular or in a specially-written letter does not matter much. Obviously, a known author receives more consideration at the hands of the publishing fraternity than a complete stranger; but the best work, if it be considered *not marketable*, may be refused in spite of the author's name. When a novelist or a playwright seeks a publisher for a first book of poems or a volume of essays, he encounters almost as many difficulties as the literary beginner. In this country, at least, the public insists upon an author living up to his reputation by producing only one kind of work. Very rarely indeed will the public permit the professional author to take the liberties which it permits to such a popular idol as Mr. Gladstone, who at one time might have written on "Snakes in Iceland" with a certainty of being read.

To return to the young author. In no case should he take advantage of the publisher's request for an acknowledgment of the receipt of his returned MS. by begging to be informed of the precise reason for its rejection. Let him accept the issue with resignation; and, after carefully looking through the MS., to remove any ominous pencil marks that may appear thereon, send it forth upon its travels afresh. He may have to do this again and again. Satisfied that he is sending it to the right sort of publisher, his perseverance may in the end be rewarded.

It has been hinted above that the longer a pub-

lisher keeps a MS., the more may its author be hopeful of its acceptance. The present writer's "Names, and their Meaning," was retained by one publisher for two months after his reader had reported upon it. "Roughing it on the Stage" passed through a similar ordeal. Miss Hawker's search for a publisher for "Mademoiselle Ixe" was a very tedious affair. Publisher after publisher had "very carefully considered it" for a long time, with no gratifying result to the authoress. At last she took it to Mr. Fisher Unwin, who read it himself, and decided to try it on the public under a pseudonym. If, on the other hand, a MS. is returned with vexatious promptitude, it bears on the face of it the tale that the publisher's preliminary "tasting" has not rendered its careful perusal necessary; and if six or eight publishers—*of the right sort*—uniformly return it with equal promptitude, the author will be wise perhaps to lock it up in a drawer, and turn his attention to something else.

But we will take a happier view of the issue of his negotiations. We will assume that the publisher has addressed him a short letter in this style:—

"DEAR SIR,—My partner, Mr. . . . will be very happy to see you any morning this week on the subject of your work, . . . if you can make it convenient to call.—I remain, &c."

This means business. It means that the publisher has decided to take up the work on certain terms. If

the author reside in the country, alternative terms will be proposed by letter.

Of course a personal interview is the pleasantest way of bringing the business to a satisfactory termination. For, in addition to the question of terms, there may be various things to discuss touching the manner in which the work should be produced; whether it would perhaps be the better for a summarised table of contents, or a copious index; whether the author has any particular views of his own as to form and size of type, binding,¹ illustrations, and so forth; though the editorial publisher will be likely to have his own views upon all these points, and would hardly seek advice from a literary beginner.

PUBLICITY

Although the subject of publicity is one which as a rule is left in the hands of the publisher, like the other details of publishing, it is particularly important that the author should try and understand

¹ Apropos of binding, a letter appeared in a contemporary recently, asking how it is books are still issued in an uncut state. After giving a distressing account of the agonies suffered by him in hewing his way through 480 pages, the writer concluded thus: "I only wish to make a suggestion. The general public often wonders what publishers do. They do not print the books; they do not bind them; they do not even write them. Why should they not keep in their offices a machine for cutting their edges? Then, if we did not hear less of the grievances of authors against the publisher, we should certainly hear less of the grievances of the public against the publisher."

something about it, for no more fruitful source of quarrel between author and publisher exists than the question of advertising. Probably the author never existed who did not feel, after the appearance of his book, that his publisher had entered into a conspiracy to deny him the needful publicity. There would seem to be some law by which nobody ever sees an advertisement in which he is interested. An author will look over the *Athenæum* and notice the smallest announcement of the most trivial publications, but if by chance his own book is there, occupying space valued at some few pounds, that is the advertisement which he will surely miss. Again, authors have no idea of the cost of advertising, or of the numerous media through which £20 or £30 can be dissipated in a few days. In the case of a new author, the mere announcement of the title of a book is of little use. The advertisement must be backed up by strong press notices, and to print these in legible type is very expensive; for example, a little romance, published at 2s. 6d., the other day was fortunate enough to obtain very flattering notice from *The Times*, *The Spectator*, and *The Athenæum*, and the publisher and author agreed to try and draw attention to its merits. A very telling advertisement was prepared and inserted in a few of the most influential literary papers. The cost was as follows: *Athenæum*, 70s.; *Times*, 40s.; *Spectator*, 35s.; *Guardian*, 71s.; *World*, 42s.; *Queen*, 71s.

Thus on a single day the sum of £16. 9s. was expended in six papers. The trade price of the book being 1s. 8d., it is evident that a sale of 300 copies as a result would not "pay." It may sound incredible, but it is a fact, that an advertisement of that description addressed to hundreds of thousands of readers among the wealthy and cultured classes does not as a rule, in these days of lending libraries, effect a sale of 300 copies of a new book, however meritorious, and this fact leads some to doubt the wisdom of advertising at all. Yet no author would ever believe that his book had been fairly dealt with, unless £20 to £50 were expended with newspaper proprietors. Of course it is to be remembered that, without such support from publishers, the papers would probably soon give up the practice of reviewing books and inserting literary news.

Advertising must therefore be regarded at present as a necessary evil, and one that goes far to eat up the profits of publishing. Now and then a curious thing happens, as when Miss Corelli declines to be reviewed without thereby destroying her *clientèle*, or when an author like Mr. Lasker, the chess-player, sells thousands of copies of a book without an expenditure of a shilling in newspaper advertising. These facts ought to cause us to reflect upon what is the sort of publicity that books require, and how to obtain it; but meanwhile no author is willing to take up the position assumed by Mr. Ruskin, who declared

that it was the business of readers to seek out the author and pay him the fee of a physician, a lawyer, or an artist. The well-known passage from "Sesame and Lilies" should be printed on the fly-leaf of every book.

Of one thing there can be no doubt whatever—for one volume sold in consequence of a newspaper advertisement, a thousand are sold by exhibition in shop windows and on bookstalls, or by casual mention on the part of appreciative readers. "Books have their fate." We do not hear that the publisher of "Paradise Lost" expended much money in advertising it, and who ever saw an advertisement of the celebrated "Mavor's Spelling Book"? It is much to be feared that publishers and authors have been trying to emulate the managers of theatres and proprietors of patent medicines as regards advertisements, and that the fable of the earthen vessel and the iron pot is being exemplified in consequence.

The general rule is, however, to get as much free advertising for a book as possible by inserting references to it in columns of literary news, and afterwards to distribute copies among editors for review, and finally to advertise at discretion the press opinions if favourable.

A recent novel, on which every attention of this kind was lavished—a novel which was admittedly a work of genius, which was reviewed in papers and on which £150 were spent in advertising—failed to

achieve a sale of 2000 copies, though offered at the low price of 3s. 6d. From this fact and our other remarks under the heading of "Publicity," the young author must be left to draw his own conclusions, and to estimate the chances of pecuniary success in the case of a really clever book which has the misfortune to be issued under the name of an unknown writer.

COPYRIGHT

The copyright in a book, like the good-will of a business, is only valuable in the event of book or business turning out a success, in which case it may be valued at a certain number of years' purchase of profits.

Copyright arises from the act of publishing,¹ and according to the Copyright Act of 1842, is legally vested in the author or his assigns, but for all practical purposes it belongs to the person who undertakes the expense of publishing.

Copyright means the right to print or reprint a book, or any part of it, in any form, or to abstain from doing so; and therefore the absolute control of his book cannot usually be retained by an author unless he himself bears the expense of publication. Then he is master of the situation. But no publisher will invest money in producing an edition of a book

¹ Legal publication may be defined as the sale on British soil of the first copy of an original work and the deposit of a copy at the Copyright Office of the British Museum.

which might be rendered waste paper through a freak on the part of the author as owner of the copyright. Copyright, therefore, from an author's point of view, resolves itself merely into retaining such an interest in his work that no copies can be sold in any form without his deriving some benefit therefrom. The author and his legal representatives can retain the absolute control over a published work (by publishing on his own account), or retain an interest in the sale of copies (by agreement with the publisher), for a period of forty-two years from the date of publication or for his lifetime and seven years afterwards (whichever is the longer period). At the end of that period the right to reprint it becomes common property. Registration of ownership is only necessary as a preliminary to bringing an action for piracy, in which case it would be most convenient for the publisher to act as registered owner of the copyright, assuming that the book is published on the royalty or share-profits system.

A new edition does not carry with it an extension of copyright, if it be identical with the original edition. But where the book has been revised and in part rewritten, a new lease of copyright is secured for it in respect of the fresh matter *only*. Though after forty-two years (or the author's lifetime and seven years) any one would be at liberty to reprint an historical or other work, he would require to be very careful to take his text from the *original* edition,

since a later edition might, in parts at least, be altogether different, and his unconscious reproduction of those parts would be an infringement of copyright.

The Copyright Act of 1842 was made operative in all the British Colonies, as well as in the United Kingdom. For long afterwards, however, popular authors and their publishers suffered considerable loss owing to the wholesale importation into Canada of pirated editions produced in the United States. This led to the passing of the Canadian Copyright Act of 1874 (confirmed by the Imperial Parliament in the following year), which secured to an English author full copyright in Canada for twenty-eight years, provided his book was published or republished in the Dominion. With regard to the other colonies, even popular authors have no right to complain. Large numbers of each successful book are exported to our British possessions, where the works of well-known writers are in constant demand. But this fact can hardly interest the young author.

True to its protective policy, America has persistently held aloof from every attempt to establish an International Copyright Law. Previous to 1891, no one but an American citizen could enter his claim to the copyright of a work published in the States. Now things are slightly different, and yet far from all that could be described as fair.

The English Copyright Law has never recognised any distinction between British subjects and aliens.

A foreign author possesses the same rights as a native in the work he *first* publishes here; but America still denies any copyrights to an alien, except on condition that he prints his book from type set up in the United States. It is, therefore, impossible for the British author to secure copyright in London and New York unless he employs the American workman to print his book; which, of course, is what our "grabbing" cousins aim at.

Only in the case of really popular authors can this extra expense be afforded, and therefore the majority of British authors must necessarily be deprived of copyright in America—a fact which is all the more galling since every scribbler in America can secure British copyright by mailing a few copies of his book to London for formal publication on an appointed day.

By the terms of the Berne Convention of 1885, authors resident in any of the countries embraced in the Convention (Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Norway and Sweden) have their rights protected in all the affiliated countries. Thus a translation of a French work cannot be published in this country without a formal authorisation. The French author has, in fact, the same copyright in his work in England as he has on his own soil. And conversely, an English author has at his disposal the foreign rights of his work in the affiliated countries

under the Berne Convention, and the duration of those rights is governed by the country of origin.

A comparison between the English duration of copyright and that of other countries cannot fail to prove interesting. In the United States forty-two years is the maximum period; the life of the author is not taken into account as in England, and after twenty-eight years the book must be registered anew, which proceeding secures for it an extension of fourteen years. In France, Belgium, Spain, Russia, Norway and Sweden, the copyright endures during the author's lifetime and fifty years after; in Italy, the life and forty years, or eighty years from publication; in Austria, Denmark, and Switzerland, the life and thirty years; in Japan, the life and five years, with a minimum of thirty-five years dating from the month in which the work is inscribed. Periods calculated from the date of publication obtain: in Greece, fifteen years; Turkey, forty years; the Netherlands, fifty years. In the South African Republic the copyright is secured for fifty years from the date of certifying to the deposit of the work. In Mexico, Guatemala, and Venezuela the copyright is perpetual.

As regards the Law of Copyright, upon which so many expensive books have been written, for the edification of British authors, perhaps the less said the better. It has been well described by a writer in *The New Saturday* (October 24, 1896): "The law

of copyright, depending as it does upon about twenty different statutes drawn up at different dates, without reference to each other, upon the *obiter dicta* of judges on cases that have come before them at intervals during the past hundred years, and upon a mass of trade customs, many of which could probably be overruled on the ground that they are contrary to good morals or public policy, is at present in a condition only to be described by the one expressive word, 'muddle.' . . .

"To begin with, there is the question of copyright in articles contributed to periodicals. At present, no one knows for certain to whom that copyright belongs in the absence of a specific and definite agreement. The belted opinion seems to be that it belongs to no one, but simply ceases to exist; that the proprietor of the periodical cannot use the article elsewhere than in his periodical without the author's leave; that if the author reproduces it, even after a reasonable lapse of time, the publisher can restrain him by injunction. . . . Then there is the case of copyright in lectures and sermons. As it is, any man who wishes to protect his lecture is required to give notice of his intention to two Justices of the Peace. Otherwise it is a public lecture, and any one is free to take it down in shorthand and publish it; and in any case the law provides no protection whatsoever against the re-delivery of a lecture, compiled at a great outlay of

time and learning, by any ignorant person who can succeed in getting hold of a report of it. Here, too, the necessity of reform is obvious. Thirdly, there is the question of abridged editions. At present, the purchaser of the 'copyright and all rights' finds himself in a very curious position in this regard. He intended to have bought every right in the book which the original owner possessed; but, though the expression 'copyright and all rights' would apparently include the right which the author obviously had, of issuing an 'abridged' or 'expurgated' or 'improved' edition, this right does not, as a matter of fact, pass to the publisher. The author cannot, indeed, take any proceedings under the Copyright Act, as Mr. Sidney Lee discovered when he tried to do so and was non-suited; but he can allege that his reputation has been injured, and bring an action for damages. Here, once again, is chaos which sadly needs to be reduced to order."

TERMS

Before discussing the question of terms let us see what it is that the author has to bargain for. It is of course the right of printing for a limited time, or for a period of forty-two years. This is known to the lawyers as copyright. Copyright is defined as the right of multiplying copies, and therefore the author has to consider what such a right is likely to be

worth, whether it is merely a case of settling the division of profit on the sale of a few hundred copies, or whether (as in the case of a cookery book, a dictionary, or a collection of hymns) there is a strong probability of a large continuous sale for ten or twenty years. Upon this essential question all agreements are based.

Now it is clear that if a valuable property is likely to be created by the author's labour, he should on no account part with his interests for any such sum as a publisher would be likely to pay in ready money; he should make some agreement by which he will have a fair share of control over his work, and secure the right to amend future editions, or even in certain contingencies transfer the publication to another firm. He should also stipulate for a share in the fees paid for the right of translation or American reprints. All these points are matters for discussion and agreement, just like the covenants in the lease of a house or the right to work a mine.

If, on the other hand, the author's work is clearly of ephemeral interest, he will perhaps be wise to commute his possible receipts by way of profits for a lump sum down, and leave the publisher to make what he can out of his bargain. It cannot be too often stated, however, that in selling the copyright the author parts with all control over his property, though his name will always be associated with the book under any circumstances. This might lead to

sad complications, as, for instance, when an author wished in after years to recant some opinions which he held in his youth. Of course no law on earth could compel a publisher to suppress or modify the text of a book of the copyright in which he was the sole owner. Similarly, a publisher might take it into his head to withdraw from circulation a book which he controlled by reason of the author having parted with his rights. To take an extreme case, suppose that every Roman Catholic writer sold his copyright, what is there to prevent the Protestant Alliance from buying up the copyright from the publishers, and so suppressing books which are obnoxious to them?

These are matters that go to the root of all agreements between author and publisher for dealing with a special class of property with which the original owner (the author) must always be identified, through whatever vicissitudes the book may pass.

Now, with regard to terms, an author should never lose sight of the fact that if, as a beginner, he has his reputation yet to make, a good publisher's name will be a distinct advertisement for him. On the other hand, an author of reputation gives prestige to the publisher; wherefore publishers are ready to take up the works of a well-known author on almost any terms. Bearing this in mind, the young author should be only too

pleased to have his first book brought out by a good house on any terms short of being actually asked to put his hand into his pocket. Some day, perhaps, the position may be reversed, and then he will be able to dictate terms to the publisher. Occasionally, even, he may be asked how far he is prepared to accept a financial responsibility in the production of his work. The book may be an expensive one to produce;¹ it may require illustrating, or it may be of a nature requiring bold advertisement. Still, as long as he steers clear of the "publisher on commission," the author may rest assured that he will be fairly dealt with, and receive in some shape or other value for money.

The terms usually entered into between author and publisher come under three heads, viz.: Purchase outright; deferred payments by results (royalty or "share profits"); and publication on commission.

When a publisher offers to purchase a work outright it is clear that he has great faith in it; and then an author would do much better to stipulate for a royalty. However, a lump sum down is generally a tempting bait for a young author. But he

¹ It is not at all an uncommon thing for a publisher to accept a badly-written book for the sake of the idea or technical information it contains, and in that case there will be a "ghost" in the background to be paid. Indeed, the circumstances attending the issue of books are of infinite variety, and call for the most diverse agreements between publisher and author.

cannot sell the work and have a small royalty too; it must be one way or the other. On the whole, the system of purchasing a work outright is not very satisfactory. If the book prove a great success, the author thinks he has made too great a sacrifice;¹ if it fail, the publisher loses his "copyright" money, and writes the author down on his black list. Mr. F. Anstey sold his "Vice-Versa" outright for twenty pounds, but Messrs. Smith, Elder, & Co. subsequently sent him a cheque for an additional two hundred and fifty pounds. Again, after disposing of his entire interest in "King Solomon's Mines" for fifty pounds, Mr. Rider Haggard received from Messrs. Cassell & Co. a thousand pounds by way of bonus. Such examples of commercial generosity are of course rare, and must not be taken into account in making a bargain. On the other side, it must be remembered that, by purchasing the work outright, Messrs. Longmans lost heavily over "Endymion"; yet it is said that, when Lord Beaconsfield remitted them a cheque to cover their loss, they magnanimously declined it.

Dr. Nansen received ten thousand pounds for the

¹ In Mr. Augustus Hare's recently published Autobiography there is a reference to the "pitiful" sum he received for writing a handbook of Oxfordshire for Mr. John Murray the elder, in 1859 or 1860. The present Mr. Murray, however, has turned up the correspondence of that period, and finds that the "pitiful" sum was £142 for the Oxfordshire handbook and £180 for the Durham handbook, on both of which there was a net loss, when Mr. Murray died, of £158 and £300 respectively.

account of his explorations in "Farthest North," while ten thousand guineas were offered and accepted by the executors of General Gordon for the copyright of his "Letters and Journals." These spirited bids for fame on the part of ambitious publishers are often regretted when the day of reckoning comes round. The fate of the "Gordon Letters" was not much better than that of "Endymion." As an instance of the harvest that may occasionally be reaped by the publishers of a successful book—and incidentally of the loss to an author who sells his copyright—Mr. Clark Russell's novel, "The Wreck of the Grosvenor," of which thirty-five thousand copies have been sold in the United Kingdom alone, was bought for fifty pounds.¹

The royalty system² is much more satisfactory to both parties. In this case, the author gives the publisher the exclusive right to print and publish his work, subject to receiving a stated royalty in respect of each copy sold. Ten per cent. on the *published* price of the book is the most usual royalty—a term, by the way, derived from the fixed sum

¹ The fates seem generally against the publisher of new writers. Mr. Clark Russell's early works were published by the late Mr. King, who gave as much for the first-fruits of this author—published anonymously—as the later publisher paid for the masterpiece.

² The late Dr. Brewer had reason to rejoice that Messrs. Jarrold refused to give him the sum of fifty pounds down for his "Guide to Science," since he afterwards got more annually by royalties than he had asked for the entire copyright.

accruing to the sovereign of these realms for each ton of coals brought to bank at the pits. A young author should not be too anxious to impose a high royalty. A moderate royalty is generally more profitable in the long-run than a high one. For after a certain time the run upon a book—if it has enjoyed a successful run—ceases, and the publisher finds it necessary to invest fresh capital in the work. Then is the time to advertise it anew, or go to the expense of issuing an illustrated edition, or invent a new binding, or offer special trade terms. But how can he afford to do this when, according to the terms of his agreement, he is bound to pay to the author, say, a third or a fourth of his takings? Rather than spend his capital only to benefit the author, he allows the book to die a natural death. A well-known scientific series is now being starved to death owing to a high rate of royalty fixed twenty years ago.

In writing of Charles Kingsley, Professor Max Müller refers to the fact that his defeat in the controversy with Newman caused the sudden collapse of the sale of his most popular books. "I saw him after he had been with his publishers to make arrangements for the sale of his *copyrights*. He wanted the money to start his sons, and he had a right to expect a substantial sum. The sum offered him seemed almost an insult, and yet he assured me that he had seen the ledgers of his publishers, and

that the sale of his books during the last years did not justify a larger offer. He was miserable about it, as well he might be. He felt not only the pecuniary loss, but, as he imagined, the loss of that influence which he had gained by years of hard labour. In this idea Kingsley was wrong, for we are told, 'Immediately after his death there came the most extraordinary reaction. His books sold again in hundreds of thousands, and his family received in *one year* a great deal more from his *royalties* than had been offered him for the *whole copyright* of all his books.'"

Perhaps the most satisfactory system of all is the share-profits system. By this is meant an agreement whereby the publisher takes all the risks and the author shares in the profits. If there are no profits the author receives nothing for his work: that is the extent of his liability.

The meaning of this agreement is that the publisher's faith in the work warrants him in bearing the costs of production, providing the author is willing to be paid by results. "Then why not pay a royalty?" asks the author. To which the publisher replies: "Your book must be produced in luxurious style; it will require illustrating; it would be all the better for an introduction by . . . I must get up an illustrated prospectus, and circulate it through the post: in short, I have no idea what the cost will be, and therefore cannot fix an equitable royalty.

All I can say is that I am prepared to spend £100 to £200 upon your book if you are content to wait for your reward until my expenses are cleared." It also affords the publisher protection against loss in another way. The author may wish to have his proofs submitted in "slips" instead of pages; he may wish for so many additional illustrations; he may re-write whole paragraphs and pages of the book after it has been put in type, and thus incur heavy charges for corrections. "Oh, very well," says the publisher, fortified with a share-profits agreement, "I am perfectly willing to fall in with your wishes; but please to remember that you are running up the expenses, and so cutting down your own share of the profits." Repeated reminders of this nature never fail to put a check upon the author's artistic zeal. Does it ever happen that an author profits largely by entering into such an arrangement? It does. "The Light of Asia" is a case in point. Sir Edwin Arnold would have been quite ready to sell out the copyright of his poem for a few pounds, but the publisher, the late Mr. Trübner, preferred the share-profits system. As the event proved, a considerable sum was netted on the venture by both parties, and years afterwards the author sold out his remaining interest for a sum in four figures.

So far we have considered terms from the point of view of "heads I win, tails you lose," which,

upon the whole, is best for the majority of authors. But it is idle to pretend that such a system of publishing has not some affinity with borrowing money at sixty per cent. You cannot eat your cake and have it; and the author who determines to secure the full reward of his literary labours must become, if not his own publisher, at least his own banker. If Mr. Ruskin now derives a fine income from his published writings, it is mainly because he was in a position to finance his undertaking and employ a publisher to act as trade agent. Sir Lewis Morris publishes his own poetry, while the author of the best French dictionary is a printer, who delivers his books ready bound to the publisher, to be accounted for at a fixed price. Henry Thomas Buckle, with true commercial instinct, published his "Civilisation" at his own charges, and records the fact that he received in 1858, within a year of issue, a cheque from Parkers for £665, 7s. for the sale of the first edition, 1500 copies. Mr. Jerome K. Jerome paid the paper merchant's, the printer's, and the binder's bills, and commissioned Messrs. Chatto & Windus to publish his "Stage-Land" for his own advantage. The present writer published "The Stage with the Curtain Raised" himself, and knowing how to reach his particular *clientèle*—aspirants for histrionic fame—made money by it. The author of "Jesus the Carpenter" created a demand for

his work among clergymen and Sunday-School teachers by methods quite out of the province of an ordinary publisher. Indeed, a private individual can often do more to further the sale of a book in which he is financially interested than a publisher who has his hands full with several hundred books on his "list." It has often been asserted that a publisher under these circumstances will not "push" the sale of a work—a remark that shows a total misunderstanding of a publisher's business. A modern publisher is at once (*a*) a speculator; (*b*) a manufacturer; (*c*) a wholesale bookseller; and expects to derive a profit from each branch of his business—though, if he had the choice, there is little doubt that he would prefer to close *a* department altogether. What is certain is that the staff of *c* department care not a jot on what terms a book is published as long as it *sells*; and the bookseller who will take stock of a book merely to please the publisher or his "traveller" has not yet been discovered.

The author who from choice or necessity is about to print a book at his own expense should employ a London publisher to manufacture and sell the edition. The book will then be turned out in the usual style of the house, and the booksellers and reviewers will never know that the publisher has not invested his own money in the enterprise. The greatest care should be taken in the choice of a publisher. The publisher will make a profit on the

transaction, of course ; and it is the author's business to see that he gets value for money. Let him not employ local printers ; nor employ local booksellers. He should go at once to the publisher of works of the same class, ask to see his recent lists, advertisements, and catalogues, buy one of his books, and notice how it is turned out, and inquire his terms for producing and publishing a book in all respects as one of his own publications. For then he will be paying—or should be—for hardly-earned skill, and the use of an imprint that has acquired a certain value by thousands of pounds' worth of advertising. But never waste money by attempting to become the architect of a book, or trust to the resources of a local printer. As well might he at once write across the title-page, "Rejected of publishers ; this is an author's venture," which is not the way to recommend it to reviewers and the "trade," however good the book may be ; for the booksellers, who are used to handling the finest productions of the printing-press, have a prejudice against "commission books," which it is wise to humour by carefully concealing the circumstances of its proprietary. It was only the other day that Mr. George Allen had a hearty laugh over the guileless public that supposed Mr. Ruskin's books to have been produced at the village of Orpington. As a fact, they have always been printed by an eminent firm of printers, under the superintendence of experts in book-production.

Dismissing the author-publisher, let us return to the more usual mode of publishing when the publisher is willing, and the author is not willing, to pay all expenses.

Under the agreement submitted by the publisher of his choice, the author will discover that in some shape or other the publisher requires payment under three heads: (1) for the risk he runs in using his capital; (2) for his services as managing partner in the matter; (3) and for the work done by his staff. FAILURE ON THE PART OF THE AUTHOR TO REALISE THIS FACT HAS BEEN AT THE BOTTOM OF ALL QUARRELS BETWEEN AUTHOR AND PUBLISHER. Mr Zangwill has written most pregnant words on this subject.¹

¹ "For between the message and its hearers come a great number of intermediaries, many of them inevitable. We will assume, for the purposes of our analysis, that our prophet is already popular. The hearers are waiting eagerly. Here is the manuscript, there are the readers. Problem—to bring them together. This is the task of the publisher. Incidentally, the publisher employs the printer, bookbinder, &c.; but this part of the business, though usually undertaken by the publisher, does not necessarily belong to him. He is essentially only the distributor. In return for this function of distribution, whether it includes supervising mechanical production or not, the publisher is entitled to his payment. How much? Evidently, exactly as much as is made by capital and personal service in business generally. The shillings of the public are the gross returns for the book. These have to be divided between all the agents employed in producing the book—author, printer, binder, publisher, bookseller, &c. . . . 'The best work at the best prices' is no unworthy motto. The Authors' Society, indeed, tries to put this non-moral principle of valuation upon an ethical basis. It says, for instance, that if the publisher reckons

The publisher generally stipulates that all details of production, sale, and advertising, shall be left in his hands; and although this may strike some authors as a somewhat arbitrary proceeding, it is really difficult to see how otherwise a publisher could conduct his business. Imagine a hundred authors in correspondence with a single publisher

his office expenses in the cost of production, then the author has a right to reckon his, even including any journeys or researches he may have had to make in order to write his book. But this right is not only an ethical fallacy: it is a politico-economical one, because the economical question is only concerned with the *distribution* of the work, and the money or the heart's blood that went to make it has nothing to do with the question, while the publisher's office expenses are of the essence of the question. Some authors also claim that the publisher has no right to make successful books pay for the unsuccessful. But here again he has every right. The publisher is not a piece-worker; he has to keep a large organisation going, involving ramifications in every town. It is the existence of this network, of this distributive mechanism, that enables the successful book to be sold everywhere; and the publisher, like every business man, must allow percentages for bad debts and unprofitable speculations. Publishers have a right to capture the bulk of the profits of an author's first books, because they largely supply the author with his public. It is surprising how even good books have to be pressed on an unwilling world, much as cards are forced by conjurers. The number of people that select their books by their own free-will is incredibly small. On the other hand, when a popular author brings a publisher a book, it is he who improves the publisher's distributing agency, by bringing him new clients, and even sometimes strengthening his position with booksellers and libraries; by enabling him, armed with a book universally in demand, to fight against deductions and discounts throughout his business generally. And, just as the publisher may rightly depress the profits of an unknown author, so the popular author has a moral right to larger royalties, which right, however, would avail him nothing were it not backed by might. It is in the competition of rival publishers that his strength lies."

upon the innumerable details connected with book-production ; the thing is impossible.

This arrangement does not, however, prevent an author writing a short note,—a note requiring no reply, suggesting things that the publisher may possibly overlook ; such communications are always most welcome to a busy man.

Agreements should provide for notice being given to the author before the sale of stock as a “remainder.”

The equitable division of any money received by either party for the right of translation, or for what are called “courtesy rights” in America, should be provided for.

The terms on which an author shall obtain from the publisher copies of his own book should be mentioned in all agreements, and authors ought to remember that every copy given to friends probably serves for the reading of half-a-dozen persons who would, but for his misplaced generosity, have bought copies, or at least have depleted Messrs. Mudie's shelves—a consummation devoutly to be wished.

Next to the question of division of the money received from the public for copies of the book, perhaps even of equal importance is the fixing of arrangements for the sale of the book under certain contingencies before alluded to. What is to happen if the author die, or the publisher become bankrupt ? Should executors have any control over an author's

work, and may the creditors of a publisher take possession of a copyright and plant in which the author has an interest? These are important questions, and should be answered in the agreement. Experience has shown that the best way of meeting the difficulty is to insert a clause in every royalty and share-profits agreement, giving power to either party in such circumstances to purchase the other's share at a valuation.

AUTHORS' CORRECTIONS

Publishers generally insert a clause in their agreements, to the effect that if the printer's charges for corrections exceed a certain sum, the excess shall be paid by the author. Authors never seem to consider that the printer is responsible only for "literal" errors; that is to say, all those errors which are literally due to the carelessness of the compositor and the oversight of the printer's reader. He is supposed to faithfully "follow copy," and submit what is called a "clean proof" to the author. Everything foreign to the MS.—words added or altered, the substitution of capital letters or italics—he charges for. His "literals" he has to correct at his own cost; though, if the author is not very careful to distinguish these from his own errors and alterations when reading his proofs, they will in all

likelihood be charged to the publisher, and, indirectly, to himself.¹

A good way to avoid unjust charges for corrections is to mark the printer's errors (misspellings, words left out or set twice over) in *red* ink, and the author's corrections in *black*. This shows the publisher that the author is alive to his interests, and he will at once warn the master-printer of his workmen's lapses. Obviously, the duplicate retained by the author must be made to tally with the one sent back to the printer, or his commercial sagacity will go for nothing. The author should never destroy his proofs until he has reason to believe the printer's account has been finally disposed of by the publisher, because they alone constitute the evidence in case of a dispute over printers' charges. Another thing to be borne in mind by the author is, that it is next to impossible to do full justice to his proofs without

¹ As a warning, a case may be mentioned where the author, through careless preparation of his MS. for the printer, and consequent corrections in proof, caused an item in the printer's bill—"making up from slip, and author's alterations, £9, 3s." As the cost of setting up the type was only £15, 5s., it will be perceived how a careless author may upset the whole of a publisher's calculations as to cost of production. Another instance may be added, where the printer's estimate for composing was £20, 10s. 8d., but the "extras" amounted to £27, 7s. (small type, £10; making up from slip, £2, 15s.; author's alterations, £13, 18s.; deleted matter, 14s.), in addition to £3, 15s. paid for an index which the author could not be persuaded to furnish. The publisher, therefore, had to pay £51, 15s. 8d., instead of £20, 10s. 8d., and yet authors often affect astonishment at the financial results of publishing!

having the accompanying MS. read aloud to him. If he rely upon himself, he will be almost certain to make slips, and lay himself open to the charge of fathering errors on the printer without justification. The printer's reader always has a boy to read the "copy" to him, while he confines his attention to the proof; and the publisher will think all the more of an author if he retain his proofs for a day or two. He is apt to assume—and often with good reason—when they are sent back to him by return of post, that proper care has not been taken with a most important part of the author's work.

THE LITERARY AGENT

A few observations on the literary agent will fittingly serve to bring this section of "How to Publish" to a close.

The literary agent is not well-beloved of the publishing fraternity. Within certain limits he is a useful man of business; but the extent to which he has latterly usurped the functions of the publisher has given rise to a spirited paper warfare between two parties who, when all is said and done, are indispensable to each other. One thing is certain. He has entirely broken down the friendly relations formerly existing between author and publisher; and although the few "popular" authors can well afford to dispense with such feelings, and regard

the publisher as a mere tradesman, there can be no doubt that strained relations between the two bodies must result unfavourably on the whole to new writers. The publisher after all is to writers what the "bookmaker" is to a gambler on the turf—a man whose faculty for organising business renders him practically independent of the individual client. And if his needs are confined, say, to a few dozen MSS. a year, he may be pardoned for preferring to deal with those authors who are known to be "easy to live with." There is certainly food for reflection in the statement made by a leading publisher the other day, to the effect that he has never seen many of his authors, has not even corresponded with them, all his business arrangements having perforce to be made through the literary agent. A publisher who, after sustaining a loss on one or more of his previous books,¹ is at length instrumental in bringing an author to the front, naturally fancies that he has

¹ Many readers may deny the possibility of loss occurring in connection with the publication of works by really good authors. Unluckily for such an argument, facts are at hand to prove the contrary. It will hardly be disputed that writers like Robert Louis Stevenson, Thomas Hardy, and George Meredith are popular and even great writers. Certain of their early works happened to be published by Mr. C. Kegan Paul, one of the best judges of literature that ever catered for the public, who was so far from being satisfied with the results, and so far from believing that they would ever become popular, that he surrendered the copyrights for a very trifling consideration. No class of author is so dangerous to the publisher as the "rising" author—the author of whose ability there is no question, and for whose works there is no market.

some claim to that author's consideration. Judge, then, his surprise when his quondam ally one day invites him to make a bid for his latest work through the literary agent.



"If you want my work now," says the author to him by the mouthpiece of the middleman, "you must expect to pay for it at an extravagant rate. There was a time, perhaps, when I heartily appreciated the service you rendered me in giving me a start in literature, but I am now happily in a position to dictate my own terms. And please to remember that whereas formerly I was content to wait a year for a statement of accounts, I must now have so much money down. If you do not care to take the book on these terms, there are plenty of other publishers who will, now that my name is great in the land. I am really very sorry to have to put it to you like this, but you see my hands are tied by the literary agent, who takes his ten per cent. commission for doing what I used to do for myself."

Now the publisher finds himself in this position—he must either pay the agent an exorbitant price for the future work of an author whose name would be a credit to his "list," or else do without it. The literary agent was invented as a check on the publisher, but in his new and self-assumed character he is rapidly absorbing all the best work in the market, and has become practically a wholesale dealer in copyrights.

With these things, however, the literary beginner has no concern, since the real literary agent only condescends to undertake the business of those well-known authors whose work is eagerly sought after by literary speculators.

There still exist a few so-called literary agents who make a living by acting as quasi-lawyers, and to whom writers resort who have any grievance in regard to their publishers. It is doubtful whether even one of them ever did any good in any single case. Publishers are, after all, men with far greater business experience than the literary agent, who, perhaps, has recently "run" a dispensary or taken a theatrical company on tour, and it is tolerably certain that the interference of an unknown person who talks of his "client" will stiffen the publisher's resistance, and render any peaceful accommodation of the dispute quite impossible. Authors may be safely advised in all cases to act as they would in any other relation of life—avoid fussing over trifles, and meet serious injury by a writ. If a case is not sustainable in the law-courts, there is nobody so likely to be aware of the fact as the publisher, and the tall talk of the literary agent is then listened to, if at all, with amusement mingled with contempt. It is worth noting in passing that, with all the agitation of late years, not one case is recorded in which a publisher has been convicted of improper conduct, and the stories often told of secret profits, and

sham ledgers, and fraudulent accounts are yet to be proved to be more than the product of a novelist's fertile brain. As for the self-styled "literary man," "authors' agent," and "late publishers' reader," who advertise to read, revise, and introduce MSS. for a fee, they are best left alone. Publishers of any standing never entertain the work of unknown writers which is introduced through such tainted channels.



II

PERIODICALS

PRELIMINARY

IN its literary acceptation the term periodical conveys a wide meaning. It comprehends every kind of publication issued at intervals. A periodical may thus be a Christmas annual, a quarterly review, a monthly magazine, a weekly miscellany of fact and fiction, or a daily or weekly newspaper. With the term journal, as applied to a newspaper, no fault can be found. It is etymologically correct, and a writer whose business it is to chronicle or comment upon the events of the passing day is in all respects a journalist.

The magazine contributor loves to style himself a *littérateur*. This high-sounding designation, if a trifle un-English, is perfectly warranted, since it cannot be denied that magazine work is often of much better quality than ordinary newspaper writing. Note the qualification, *ordinary* newspaper writing. Many a leader, *critique*, or descriptive article which appears in the newspapers to-day is

fully equal, in point of literary style and finish, to the average contents of the shilling, half-crown, or six-shilling reviews. The newspaper reporter and the personal paragraphist need not be literary men, but the leader-writer, the critic, and the specialist require to be men of wide reading, extensive knowledge, and considerable literary attainments. They have to be specially trained for their work, though that work may perish in a day. The remunerative character of skilled journalistic work has encouraged many capable writers to transfer their services from the magazines to the newspapers.

THE REVIEW

A review is really much more akin to a newspaper than to a magazine. The original function of the review has, within the last two decades, been entirely usurped by the newspaper press. Book-reviewing, for example, is no longer the set business of the nominal "reviews." This work is now a regular feature of the newspapers. Such high-class journals as the *Athenæum*, the *Academy*, the *Saturday Review*, the *Spectator*, the *Speaker*, the *British Review*, are really reviews in a newspaper dress. A writer must needs be well up in his subject before he can hope to figure in the pages of a monthly or quarterly review. He must be a politician, a social

reformer, a theologian, a scholar—one whose name carries weight in a certain school of thought.

The policy of a review editor is to secure articles from all the foremost men of the day. Every one who is an authority on any subject of public interest is welcomed as a contributor. He may be a famous traveller, an astronomer, an expert on naval or military tactics, a parliamentary leader, anything but a cultured man of letters, yet his opinions are valued by those who read and think. Purely literary articles are quite exceptional; when admitted to a review they are invariably the work of eminent authors.

For these reasons the high-class review is virtually closed against a young writer. Should he think of addressing a MS. to the editor of such a periodical, he will be effectually warned off by the notice that “under no circumstances can rejected MSS. be returned”—a somewhat harsh proceeding when stamps are remitted, to say nothing of the lack of courtesy thus shown by the editor. The same warning confronts him in the high-class weekly journals, which, as we have seen, are of the nature of reviews. Let us, therefore, pass on to the monthly magazines.

THE MAGAZINE

It is in the minor magazines that young writers generally obtain their first footing in literature. No matter where they may reside, they have access to

a sprinkling of periodicals at a local Literary Institute or Free Public Library. Though nothing may be further from their thoughts than a professional literary career, they are none the less captivated by the "Notices to Correspondents" set forth on the contents-pages of all the older magazines. Being informed there that "MSS. addressed to the editor are attentively considered," &c., they rush to the conclusion that this seeming public invitation to send in MSS. bespeaks a dearth of literary matter in the editorial sanctum, and they cudgel their brains for a subject to write upon. Without any genuine inspiration, they model their earliest essay in literature on the contents of their favourite magazine. In the fulness of time the MS. upon which so many fond hopes are built is "declined with thanks." They send it on its travels again, with the same result. And they try again and again until, persuading themselves at last that the high-class monthlies are a trifle above their mark, they turn their attention to the minor periodicals, for which their raw productions are certainly better suited.

In this way, after a long, long time, they have the gratification of seeing themselves in print. And, oh, what a joy that is! "When my first effusion," wrote Charles Dickens midway in this century—"dropped stealthily one evening at twilight, with fear and trembling, in a dark letter-box, in a dark

office up a dark court in Fleet Street—appeared in all the glory of print, I walked down to Westminster Hall and turned into it for half-an-hour, because my eyes were so dimmed with joy and pride that they could not bear the light, and were not fit to be seen there.” Every author who has tasted the sweets of success cherishes the fondest recollection of that thrice-happy moment when he placed his foot on the bottom rung of the literary ladder. To have had his essay, story, or poem accepted at last, after so many futile endeavours, is a triumph that lingers in his memory until his dying day.

EARLY DISAPPOINTMENTS

A volume might be filled with the early disappointments of authors who have risen high in the world's esteem by their own unaided efforts. Thackeray, having failed as an artist, plodded on with rare patience until he made his first appearance in the *Constitutional and Public Ledger*, a periodical long since forgotten. Samuel Warren, the author of “Ten Thousand a Year,” had the initial chapter of his first work, “The Diary of a Late Physician,” rejected by all the London magazines in succession as “unsuitable to their pages,” and “not likely to interest the public.” *Blackwood's Magazine* alone remained untried. “I remember taking my packet,” he says, “to Mr. Cadell's, in the Strand, with a sad

suspicion that I should never see or hear anything more of it; but shortly after I received a letter from Mr. Blackwood, informing me that he had inserted the chapter, and begging me to make arrangements for proceeding regularly with the series. He expressed his cordial approval of that portion, and predicted that I was likely to produce a series of papers well suited to his magazine, and calculated to interest the public."

Mr. Edward Jenkins, the author of "Ginx's Baby," sent out his MSS. for ten years without the least avail, yet he wrote continually, as if certain of success. Dr. Conan Doyle endured the mortification of having his MSS. rejected for the like period. It is said that Mr. G. R. Sims has not yet exhausted the literary pabulum which he produced during his long noviciate. With the exception of one poem inserted among the "Answers to Correspondents" in the *Welcome Guest*, he did not succeed in getting into print for thirteen years!

EARLY SUCCESSES

Some authors, it is true, are successful from the very commencement. George Augustus Sala, originally intended for an artist, and working for a time as a scene-painter, sent his initial literary effort, "The Key of the Street," to *All the Year Round*. Charles Dickens promptly returned him a

five-pound note for it, with a letter of encouragement. The interest Dickens took in his contributors and their work was unbounded. He constantly amended their MSS., threw out hints for alterations and improvements, and suggested titles.

Since Dickens's death editors who have held out a similar encouragement to young writers could possibly be counted on the fingers of one hand. Among these, James Rice, of *Once a Week*; Mr. James Payn, so long associated with *Chambers's Journal* and the *Cornhill Magazine*; and Mr. F. W. Robinson (during the existence of *Home Chimes*) stand out conspicuously.

To write up to the standard of a high-class monthly magazine is an accomplishment not easily attained by a young writer. Long practice in writing for its own sake, for pure love of literature, is requisite before he can acquire that subtlety of style which alone makes his work acceptable. At the outset of his career, Macaulay made a positive toil of his endeavours to give his thoughts the best literary expression, and the same may be said of Robert Louis Stevenson.

MAKING A BEGINNING

The common complaint of the rejected is that editors do not read MSS., the sending in of which they openly invite. That there is something in this will be seen from the following passage from a

letter written by Randolph Caldecott to a lady who besought him to exert his influence with a magazine editor on her behalf:—

“ Oh, those magazines! of how many efforts have they been the graves, I wonder? I have buried cherished morsels of literature and many drawings in their gloomy depths. Editors of magazines, I know, are smothered by the quantity of literary matter poured in upon them, and, as a rule, they only read those MSS. which bear a name already favourably known to them. If the friend of an editor hints that he has in his pocket a MS. which he would like him to read, the editor seizes his hat and rushes away to keep some vague appointment which he has suddenly remembered. To persuade an editor to read the work of a new writer is a feat which can only be performed by a person having a great influence over him, or by a man on whose judgment he relies, vowing that the said work is very excellent.”

Although there is something of truth in this, there is also much of playful exaggeration, as numerous writers who as “rank outsiders” have yet had their work accepted by magazine editors, could testify.

THE OLD-FASHIONED MONTHLY

A little practical insight into the *modus operandi* of dealing with authors' MSS. at the office of a high-class monthly magazine will, perhaps, serviceably discourage the inexperienced from sending their wares by wholesale into a market already overstocked.

The better-class magazines in this country are of two kinds. There are the old-fashioned non-illustrated monthlies—*Blackwood's*, the *Cornhill*, *Temple Bar*, &c., and there are the latter-day illustrated monthlies, of which the *Strand* was one of the earliest. It is well known that Sir George Newnes took his idea of the *Strand Magazine* from *Harper's*, *Scribner's*, and the *Century*, which had then for some years found their way across to these shores from America.

The mode of conducting these two kinds of English magazines is as different as is their superficial appearance. Without a single exception the old-fashioned monthlies are owned and run by the old-established book-publishing houses. In the face of the enormous competition they encounter in these days, it is difficult to persuade ourselves that they all pay their way. Yet it serves a publisher's purpose to run a magazine, if only as a medium for his regular trade announcements. A magazine of this class is more far-reaching in the

country at large than any newspaper. New or old, there is scarcely a publisher who has not at one time handled, or who does not think of some day handling, a magazine.

That the old-fashioned monthlies continue to live at all in these progressive days is a circumstance largely attributable to their time-honoured associations. They are to be found on the tables of all the Literary, Mechanics', Church, and Young People's Institutes and Free Public Libraries throughout the country, as also in all the reading-rooms of Clubland. Like *Punch*, they have come to be regarded as an institution; and the monthly notices of their contents in the newspapers keep alive the mere fact of their existence in the minds of those who never think of reading them.

Despite the encouraging "Notices to Correspondents," ever present on the contents-pages of the *Cornhill*, the *Gentleman's*, *Temple Bar*, and all the other magazines of the same class, it must not be supposed for one moment that their editors by any means rely upon outside contributions. Their space is generally filled by matter for which they make their own arrangements, or which comes to them with the recommendation of a good name. No kind of periodical is ever put into the market without a long and attractive "list of contributors." Moreover, every well-known author avails himself of the opportunity of recommending the work of a young

writer to a magazine editor, where he would hesitate to commit a publisher to the risk attendant upon bringing out a first book from the pen of his *protégé*. A contribution by an unknown hand can always be admitted to goodly company in a magazine on its merits.

It was exactly in this spirit that the original conductors of the high-class non-illustrated monthlies—publishers of the old school—sought to discover new writers through the medium of their magazine. Their motive was a laudable one at a time when writers were far fewer than they are to-day; but though the spread of education has enormously increased the number of would-be authors, they have allowed their open invitation for MSS. from all parts of the United Kingdom to remain in its old place, and all the newer magazines since Thackeray's time have followed suit; so that the "Notices to Correspondents" is stereotyped on the contents-page of each magazine, as is the word "regrets" on the formal circular that accompanies a rejected MS. on its homeward journey.

Are the MSS. submitted for approval as "attentively considered" as this encouraging editorial would imply? Those that are read are attentively considered, but how few are read! There is such a thing as "tasting" them. To "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest" them all were a vain endeavour. The MSS. which are every day poured into

a magazine editor's sanctum are so numerous as to baffle every attempt to satisfactorily cope with them. Small wonder that, to quote the familiar editorial, "MSS. must be accompanied by sufficient postage stamps for their return in case of non-acceptance." In the nature of things, their rejection is almost a foregone conclusion, and authors have only too good reason to be thankful for the trouble that is everywhere taken to return them. Life would not be worth living if an editor had to conscientiously plod through all the MSS. he receives in his daily post-bag. Glance over them he may—by proxy.

The editors of the high-class monthlies are usually men of acknowledged position in the world of letters. In nearly all cases they act also as "literary adviser" to the book publishers running the magazine. So far from being employed at the magazine office the livelong day, they run up to town from their country or suburban residences once or twice a week, and after seeing how things are going, take back with them such MSS. as have been laid aside for them by their assistants. The process of carefully removing from their wrappers, and straightening out, the MSS. received at the office every day, occupies a considerable portion of the sub-editor's time. Those which bear a familiar name are laid on one side for the editor; the rest are heaped together for a preliminary "tasting" as opportunity offers. When such an opportunity arrives, in the intervals of sending

out proofs and "making up" the magazine (always a couple of months or more in advance), the practised eye of the sub-editor determines, almost at a glance, whether or not a MS. merits the editor's careful consideration. If the subject-matter of the first folio fail to reach the high level of excellence he looks for, he rejects it summarily. Of the MSS. thus "tasted," a certain percentage is passed on to the editor. Many even among the more talented writers fail of acceptance through gross inattention to mechanical details. Let the quality of their work be what it may, if their MS. be written in a cramped hand, if it be disfigured by wholesale corrections and interlineations, the sub-editor will probably not even take the trouble to "taste" it. He will return it with the usual "regrets." Some authors betray a marked eccentricity in the size or shape of the paper they use. This is scarcely wise. Edgar Allan Poe is said to have often had his MSS. rejected, because he habitually wrote on narrow rolls of paper that never could be got to lie flat on an editor's table. Abnormally large or small-sized sheets are alike to be deprecated.

MSS. should, if possible, as has before been said, be type-written. As Charles Lamb used to say, "All manuscript reads raw." Dickens had a rooted objection to wading through manuscript. Everything that came to him from a known contributor was at once put in type. With a rough proof

before him, he was then in a much better position to give the article or story his attentive consideration. Many editors nowadays expressly stipulate that "MSS. must be type-written, otherwise they will neither be read nor returned." The old-fashioned monthlies have not yet followed the example of the *Pall-Mall Magazine*, *To-Day*, *Chapman's*, &c.; they do not so much as say that "MSS. *should* be type-written." Nevertheless, the day is probably not far distant when every magazine and minor periodical will decline to deal with the actual handwriting of unknown authors. Meantime, if for any reason a young writer cannot get his MS. typed, he should consider no trouble too great, no toil too severe, to make the written sheet almost compel perusal by its general neatness. If his handwriting be bad, he must choose between having it transcribed or type-written by professional hands.

Long letters addressed to the editor with a MS. are not read; to write them is therefore only a waste of time. There is not the slightest need for an accompanying note, however brief. In all cases the writer's postal address should be written on the first folio of the MS., and a stamped directed envelope or wrapper enclosed. A copy of the MS., identical with the one sent out, should be kept, as editors do not hold themselves responsible for accidental loss of MSS.

Authors of experience, who have only their fugitive

work to rely upon for an income, are by no means so eager to write for magazines as the uninformed would imagine. They know from bitter experience that a considerable time must necessarily elapse before an accepted contribution can appear. They prefer to write for newspapers and periodicals of a more popular character, in which the chances of early insertion are not so remote, and where consequently they get an earlier settlement of accounts. It is no unusual thing for a magazine article or story accepted on its merits to be held over for a year or eighteen months after it has been put in type. Month after month it will be found that it does not fit exactly into its appointed pages; or it is "crowded out" by some specially attractive contribution which the editor is anxious to use at once.

If we take up any one of these old-fashioned high-class monthlies, we shall find that the serial story and about half-a-dozen articles represent its whole contents. Of these articles the majority have been arranged for, or they are the work of writers already identified with the magazine. An old contributor does not have to wait so long for insertion as a new one. He has hit the editor's fancy, and the sub-editor, in "making-up," drops in his contribution as soon as possible. The new writer receives no such consideration. Month after month he looks for his article in vain. By the time, therefore, he is made happy on account of his

appearance in a high-class magazine, his patience will have been sorely tried. And if circumstances compel him to look to the early reward of his labours, he will exercise the wisdom in future of letting the magazines severely alone. Substantial though the honorarium may be when it at length reaches him, it scarcely atones for the disappointments he has been fated to undergo in the interim. To live by magazine writing alone is an achievement of which few can boast. A hand-to-mouth existence, dependent upon a publisher's counting-house arrangements, is only too well calculated to drive a poor author to desperation. James Thomson, the author of "The City of Dreadful Night," died miserably in a London hospital while one of his finest poems was awaiting insertion in a monthly magazine!

REMUNERATION

According to the unwritten law of Literary Land, payment for accepted matter is generally made "on publication." This means that a cheque awaits the contributor on the day his article appears; or it may be on the first, the fifteenth, or the last day of the month following. All magazine publishers that pay at all (for many minor periodicals are "supported by voluntary contributions") have a monthly settling-day with their contributors. Only one or two magazines adopt the method of paying

for accepted matter as soon as they have received the corrected proof back from the writer. If it be urged, as it so often is by poor but honest penmen, that literary contributions ought in all fairness to be paid for on acceptance, the answer is that publishers, particularly those of the old school, do not see the force of locking up their capital in MSS. which cannot be made use of for a considerable time. The argument is reasonable. Still, there is a humorous side to the question.

In regard to this system of doing business, a neat fable has obtained currency. A farmer sent some horses to a dealer in open market. The dealer agreed to pay a certain price for them, but he did not remit the money. Meeting him on the high-road soon afterwards, the farmer pressed for a settlement. "Oh," said the dealer, "you evidently don't understand my way of doing business. As soon as I sell one of your horses I'll send you the money I've agreed to give you for it. You can't expect me to sink my money in stock before I see a chance of turning it over." "That be blowed for a tale!" returned the farmer. "Wherever did you learn that trick?" "At the office of a magazine that paid for contributions on insertion," was the reply.

If literary matter were scarce, publishers would be quite willing to pay for it promptly; as it is, authors have no alternative but to conform to the established order of things. When writers become famous, they

can dictate their own terms to publishers; they will then cease to write for magazines except for handsome payment in advance. They will transfer their services from the old-fashioned monthlies to the latter-day illustrated ones which, like the best American magazines, *Scribner's*, *Harper's*, and the *Century*, achieve success by sheer force of excellence, enterprise, and liberality. In all these magazines the mode of dealing with contributors is very different. In respect of "outside contributions," which are altogether occasional, payment is made according to merit, while most of the popular authors whose work is so eagerly courted by the editor, make their own terms through the literary agent. (*For Rates of Payment, see page 157.*)

THE ILLUSTRATED MONTHLY

The literary agent is particularly energetic the instant he learns that a new illustrated magazine, like the *Strand*, *Pearson's*, or the *Pall-Mall*, is about to appear in the market. He addresses the projector confidentially in these words: "I can let you have stories by all the best writers of the day, including . . . Terms, at the rate of *so much* per thousand words, payable on delivery of MS."

Or the projector goes to the literary agent himself, long before the newspaper paragraphist has the least idea of the new venture. Says he: "I

am prepared to pay the best price for the best work that money can buy. I want stories by Sir Walter Besant, Rudyard Kipling, Conan Doyle, Anthony Hope, I. Zangwill, H. G. Wells, Robert Barr, Grant Allen, Sarah Grand, Marie Corelli, and all the other well-known writers. No matter what the cost may be, I am in a position to pay for it. I must have great names."

Should he instead address the authors direct, he will probably be referred to the literary agent, who has all their work in his hands.

Having made these arrangements, he issues his manifesto. The attractive list of great names he announces is calculated to inspire confidence in the public mind, and the initial number of his magazine, when in due course it appears, takes the town by storm. Of outside contributors he is altogether independent, having already an efficient staff of general contributors to the newspaper or popular periodical with which he is identified. From these he makes a judicious selection. One of them he engages to interview celebrities; another, to write descriptive articles on places of interest; another he commissions to go "slumming," and so forth. Being himself the editor of the magazine, it is much more journalistic in tone than the old-fashioned non-illustrated monthly.

His great object is to illustrate everything in the best possible style; an ordinary essay, that cannot

well be illustrated, he declines. The artists he has engaged accompany his interviewers and descriptive writers to the spot. Such subjects as "Actors' Dressing-Rooms," "Sarah Bernhardt's Gowns," "The Queen's Dolls," "A Dog's Cemetery," &c., have a strange fascination for him. He sends his emissaries antiquity-hunting in the same enterprising manner as the conductors of the weekly illustrated journals despatch a special artist to sketch a battlefield, an earthquake, or an eclipse. One day it occurs to him to publish an illustrated article on "Historic Sundials," or "Old-Fashioned Vanes and Weathercocks," and his twain commissioners are forthwith sent to scour the country for quaint specimens. Another time he anticipates a great traveller's lecture before the Royal Geographical Society, by inviting him to write a detailed account of his adventures in the interests of his readers.

The space, then, in his magazine is practically monopolised by matter which he himself arranges for, so that the chances of an outside contribution finding acceptance at his hands are exceedingly remote. Nevertheless, not to close the door entirely against something of exceptional interest that may seek admittance, he inserts on his contents-page a revised form of the "Notices to Correspondents" of the old-established monthlies. But he stipulates that "MSS. should (in some cases *must*) be type-written."

A would-be contributor to these magazines would be well advised to humour the editor in this particular. If he can hit upon a novel subject, and if he can draw a little or take a snap-shot at the object he describes with a portable camera (he need not be able to develop the plates himself, any photographer can do that for him), he will find the modern illustrated magazine a profitable market for his literary wares. An author-artist has a decided advantage over the ordinary man of letters. However roughly executed his sketches may be, they will command attention, whereas a MS. sent alone may be overlooked. This observation does not apply to stories, which are illustrated by a staff artist from the author's MS. In suggesting or writing an article for which he cannot himself furnish drawings or photographs, there is always the danger of an editor ignoring the author, and causing the subject—if it be a good one—to be worked up by his own staff. Confident of the novel character of his subject, such an author should take an artist-acquaintance or an amateur photographer with him to the scene he describes. Of course, if the literary portion of the work be not well done, his contribution will not be accepted, and the editor may consider himself justified in making free with the subject.

MINOR MAGAZINES

Between the two classes of magazines just alluded to there is an intermediate class. Types of this class are *Good Words*, *Cassell's Magazine*, the *Quiver*, the *Leisure Hour*, the *Sunday at Home*, the *Sunday Magazine*, *Chambers's Journal*, *Household Words* (with which is incorporated the lately-discontinued *All the Year Round*), *Atalanta*, *Young England*, the *Young Man*, the *Young Woman*, the *Boy's Own Paper*, *Chums*, and the *Girl's Own Paper*. In all these the chances of acceptance are more favourable. As they do not openly invite contributions, the influx of MSS. is kept within reasonable limits. *Good Words*, the *Quiver*, the *Sunday Magazine*, and the *Sunday at Home*, are especially adapted for Sunday reading, and their contributors are largely clerical. *Cassell's Magazine* contains more regular "features" than any other periodical of the same class—a fact which reduces the space available for outside contributions to a few pages. The *Leisure Hour* reflects the sober traits of the Religious Tract Society, its publishers. *Young England* is the literary organ of the Sunday School Union. The *Young Man* and the *Young Woman* (the former edited by a clergyman) are semi-religious in tone. *Atalanta* is a girl's magazine. *Chums* is a worthy rival of the *Boy's Own Paper*, which has done so

much to oust the traditional "penny dreadful" from its old position. The *Girl's Own Paper* is a unique production of its kind.

Chambers's Journal has, without doubt, introduced more young writers to the world than any other periodical, its late competitor, *All the Year Round*, alone excepted. From the first its policy has been to accord an equal chance to all comers. Notwithstanding the large number of MSS. received every day, the editor conscientiously deals with them himself. His preliminary "tasting" is more reliable than that of an assistant, since he delights in discovering the meritorious work of an unknown scribe. If, for a sufficient reason, he be compelled to decline a promising MS., he invariably tempers the unkind "regrets" on the printed rejection form with a few words of his own in lead pencil. For example, "The subject has already been used." And, in truth, it is a little difficult for such an old-established periodical to keep up a constant supply of new subjects—subjects drawn from every clime under the sun. *Household Words* is essentially a story-journal, varied with miscellaneous articles of a social and domestic character. Another popular journal of miscellaneous literature is the *People's Friend*, published at Dundee. Next to *Chambers's Journal*, it is the most widely-circulated periodical north of the Tweed.

PUBLICATIONS TO BE AVOIDED

The number of minor magazines and periodicals which abound in the land is very great. Most of them are conducted on the cheapest possible lines. They are edited by clergymen or so-called philanthropists for their own private profit, the illustrations are second-hand, and the writers who supply the literary pabulum look to the publication of their names as their sole reward. In this wide field young and inexperienced writers have every inducement to run riot. It would be invidious to refer to any of these publications by name. Let the would-be author consult a press directory, or examine the periodicals lying on the tables of a local reading-room. Every religious denomination, too, has its parish magazines, and its weekly or monthly miscellanies of fireside reading. But there are some minor journals and periodicals whose editors make a rule of "lifting" the best portions from contributions sent in, and then returning the MSS. to their writers with the usual "declined with thanks." This is termed "gutting," and novices must beware. It is particularly rife among certain low-class weeklies, whose conductors offer tempting terms for strictly original matter.

Above all, let the would-be author turn a deaf ear to the voice of the tempter, whose bait is an

advertisement couched after this style: "Amateur authors may contribute to a high-class monthly magazine. Remuneration given. Particulars, one stamp." All such baits are a delusion and a snare. On writing for particulars, he will receive a high-falutin prospectus of the so-and-so Literary Society or Association, specially designed to beguile him into paying an annual subscription for the privilege of contributing to the official organ of the Society "for remuneration." The much-made-of remuneration never reaches the ambitious tyro. If, by a fluke, his article or story does find its way into the magazine—it may do so *once*; he is never so fortunate (?) a second time—his repeated applications for the "remuneration" will be parried by all manner of excuses, until, losing patience, he allows the matter to drop. More generally, however, they will end in a pressing invitation to take, as a set-off for his contribution, so many half-paid-up shares in the So-and-So Publishing Company, Limited, a totally distinct enterprise from the Literary Association, yet so far connected with it that the manager of the one is the secretary of the other. If he assent to the proposal, a little surprise awaits him, for a day or two after receiving his share-certificate, a peremptory "call note," for the balance of the share capital, comes to hand. Thus he is actually so much ready cash out of pocket by the transaction, while the shares, he soon discovers, are worthless. Eventually

the Publishing Company is declared insolvent, or voluntarily wound up; but the Literary Association continues to run its merry course as a bait for a new publishing enterprise, which the crafty manager and secretary contrive to publicly float for their own special profit.

Experienced writers are often invited to take up shares in the Company running a minor periodical as an equivalent for special work executed. Needless to state, their proper course is to agitate for the just reward of their labours, and, failing that, to sue for the amount in the County Court. In nearly all such cases, as in the one above, the reins of management are in the hands of a couple of literary adventurers, a quorum of their personal friends nominally posing as a directorate. It is useful to know that the editor is not financially responsible for literary contributions, neither is the publisher. Payment must always come, or be enforced, from the *registered proprietor*, who can easily be traced by paying a searching fee at Somerset House. This rule holds good with newspapers and periodicals of all kinds.

TRAPS FOR THE UNWARY

While on the subject of specious advertisements, a public service may be rendered by cautioning young writers against sending their MSS. to unknown and anonymous advertisers in the literary journals.

Here we touch upon a species of fraud which is every year becoming more and more flagrant. An unscrupulous hack-writer, lost to every sense of common honesty, does not hesitate to advertise in a highly-respectable journal for a story or a series of articles running to so many thousand words, under a false name or vague initials, and an equally false address. Perhaps he has been asked by a friendly editor for a story or series of articles of this required length; he may have some connection with a magazine that does not pay for contributions, or he may have discovered an opening for such matter in certain quarters. An exploration of his advertised address will generally result in the discovery that a "gentleman" merely calls there for his letters. Hundreds of MSS., good, bad, and indifferent, are irrevocably lost to their authors in this way every year.

True enough, the editor of a respectable periodical, particularly a new one, will often advertise for suitable matter from a borrowed address. But this address will invariably be somewhere in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street—never in the suburbs. It rests with the author who has a MS. of the kind advertised for, or who thinks of preparing one, to use his own discretion as to whether he can safely send off his work at once, or whether he should first address the advertiser, stating his experience, and asking for fuller particulars. His business-like

anxiety to protect himself against possible loss will convince the editor—if editor he be—that he sets some store on his work, that he is not altogether a novice. As a rule, ambitious young writers are not at all business-like.

NEWSPAPERS

Before dealing with the humbler class of periodicals—the penny papers that have sprung into such prominence within the last three or four years—some of the better-class newspapers and society journals, which take literary matter from “outside,” will profitably detain us. A select few of these, notably the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Westminster Gazette*, offer every encouragement to writers who can open up fresh ground to submit MSS. on approval. If postage stamps are sent in the usual way, and the writer’s name and address appear on the MS. itself, he may rely on his work receiving prompt attention. The notice, “To Contributors,” however, expressly states that “the sending of a proof is no guarantee of the acceptance of an article.” This may be taken for what it is worth. It means that, should an accepted article be indefinitely held over, the writer cannot demand payment for it until it is actually published. Seasonable articles of an antiquarian character are specially acceptable, but they must break fresh ground.

Hackneyed subjects are only fit for parish magazines and the like.

The *Globe* and the *Evening Standard* take well-written essays on miscellaneous subjects. The *Globe* "turnovers" have been a feature in that old-established journal for many years past. Other articles of a more journalistic nature are technically called "insides." The *Evening Standard* "specials" must be made to fit exactly into the first column on the front page of the paper, and an observant reader will notice that they are invariably cast in three long paragraphs. The casting-up of the average number of words in a newspaper column is an easy matter. *Black and White*, the *Illustrated London News*, the *Graphic*, the *Sketch*, the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, the *Queen*, the *Gentlewoman*, *To-Day*, the *Christian World*, the *Family Circle*, and various other popular weekly journals, accept outside contributions more or less regularly on approved lines. Light stories and sketches have latterly become quite a feature in the best evening papers. Mr. Anthony Hope's "Dolly Dialogues" appeared in the *Westminster Gazette*; but, like Mr. J. M. Barrie, Mr. W. Pett Ridge, and others, he had previously contributed short stories to the *St. James's Gazette*. Mr. H. G. Wells made his first appearance in the *Pall Mall Gazette*. The *Sun*, the *Weekly Sun*, the *Evening News and Post*, and the *Star*, take short stories, each of a particular kind.

Very few newspapers close their doors entirely against outside contributions, albeit it is generally advisable for a would-be contributor to place himself in communication with the editor in the first instance. If the suggested subject be a good one, the editor may express his willingness to receive the MS. MSS. sent in without the editor's authority are apt to be ignored or accidentally overlooked. At some newspaper offices—as, for example, the *Sporting Times*—the editor declines to pay for unsolicited matter, unless it is distinctly stated, in the first place, that payment is desired, and at what rate. A reply post-card, stamped and directed, is the most convenient form of addressing an editor.

WHAT NOT TO DO

The editorial sanctum should never be invaded on any pretext. Editors everywhere have too much to do to encourage the visits of a would-be contributor. Unauthoritative information elicited from a clerk at the inquiry desk is equally unsatisfactory. At the offices of the society journals, the visitor would be informed that they have their own staff, which is not strictly correct. All the society papers take paragraphs, and, on occasion, articles from outside sources. Exclusive intelligence of the movements of notabilities is welcomed by the editors of *Vanity Fair*, *Truth*, the *World*, the *London Figaro*, *Society*,

Modern Society, and the latest addition to their number, the *Social World*. Many experienced writers—journalists properly called—make a good income by writing society paragraphs based on the contents of the daily newspaper. As there is always the possibility of several writers commenting on the same topics, some of these may go off successfully; the rest will miss fire. The personal paragraphs in the evening papers are largely contributed by outside writers; they must be fresh, crisp, and interesting. The topical articles in such high-class journals as the *Spectator*, the *Saturday Review*, the *Speaker*, the *British Review*, and the *Whitehall Review*, are the work of the regular staff. An unknown writer seeking admission to their columns will find it necessary to choose an out-of-the-way subject of public interest; then, if his article be *very* good, he may accomplish his object. Let him, however, be mindful of the warning that “rejected MSS. cannot be returned,” and “the sending of a proof is no guarantee of acceptance.”

It is only by making himself useful to an editor by the intrinsic merits of an occasional contribution, that an outsider can hope to be offered a position on the recognised staff of a journal. To this end introductions, or unwarrantable attempts to “beard the lion in his den,” are of no avail. His accepted fugitive writings constitute his only credentials. Mr. Labouchere makes it a rule never to see the

bearer of an introduction until he has tested the marketable quality of his work. After he has accepted a new writer's work for some little time, an editor begins to take a personal interest in him, and a casual or a pre-arranged meeting invariably leads to a friendly arrangement. We know how Sir Walter Besant sent his first little story to James Rice at the office of *Once a Week*. The editor promptly accepted it, and a little while later invited the young author to give him a call. That friendly chat ripened into a life-long friendship, and "Ready-Money Mortiboy," "By Cœlia's Arbour," and "The Golden Butterfly," were written by them in collaboration. The process of making one's way by anonymous journalism is at the best gradual and tedious. Back-stair influence and written applications to be taken on the staff of an established journal are the deplorable attempts of the inexperienced. They do more harm than good; they only provoke an editor to have no communion with such bores.

To expect an editor to dole out book reviews, leaders, musical and dramatic criticisms, special articles, or occasional notes to a man of whom he has never heard, or, having perhaps heard of him in some way, for whose services he cannot find employment, is most unreasonable. These several departments on an established journal are in all cases undertaken by experienced pressmen engaged by

the year; although even to this rule, as to most rules, there is an exception, one of the weekly reviews having accepted several book reviews sent in on their merits by an outsider.

WHAT TO DO

Sir Walter Besant, writing on this subject somewhere, advises young writers to rely on themselves, and not upon introductions, with a view to finding employment on the press. He tells us proudly that, at the outset of his literary career, he sent a leader to a great daily newspaper without introduction of any kind. It was accepted, and he has written leaders for the same paper ever since. That was many years ago. The only advice Mr. Justin M'Carthy has to offer young writers is to "send a MS. to every paper." On coming over to London from Ireland, he had an introduction to Mr. (now Sir John) Robinson, of the *Daily News*. That genial editor could not find an opening for him. Thereupon the future historian, novelist, and politician set to work with the production of MS. by wholesale, which was despatched in all directions. Luckily for him, very little of it came back "declined with thanks." His work had the true grit in it. He was a journalist to the manner born.

This, indeed, is the only course open to a young writer seeking to earn a livelihood by literature.

Such introductions as he can command are useful only in so far as he may make friends in his chosen profession. Their practical utility is but indirect. At a moment when least expected, he may be asked to deputise for some "old hand" who is temporarily incapacitated from discharging his duties, or he may be invited to execute some special kind of work as a test of his ability. A young *littérateur* can scarcely make a mistake if he devote one-half his energies to producing good work, and the other half to making friends and seeking introductions in serviceable quarters.

ACCIDENTAL SUCCESS

Walking down Wellington Street one day, long after his arrival in London, armed with introductions to literary folk, Mr. Joseph Knight was accosted by an acquaintance saying, "You are the very man I've been looking for. My friend, the editor of the . . . wants some one to go and write a first-rate criticism on the new play produced to-night at the . . . Theatre. Will you do it? Say 'Yes,' and come and be introduced to the editor at once." Mr. Knight saw his opportunity, and made the most of it. To-day he occupies an enviable position as one of the first and most influential of dramatic critics.

A young author, on coming up to London a year

or two ago, was armed with a letter of introduction to Mr. Coulson Kernahan, literary adviser to Messrs. Ward, Lock, Bowden, & Co. Nothing came of it for a very long time. He had other introductions to gentlemen more or less connected with literature, who received him kindly, and dismissed him. But one day Mr. Kernahan was asked by a gentleman residing at Southend if he knew of any one competent to edit a new paper for him. Thereupon Mr. George Knight was wired for to enter upon his duties at once as the editor of *Anecdotes*.

In this sense introductions are useful; but their resultant effect is only too often delayed for a considerable period. A young writer's reliance must always be on the work he produces and sends out "in the usual way." By keeping his eye on the "Situations Vacant" on the back page of the *Daily News* and in other journals, daily and weekly, he will constantly see advertisements for articles and stories emanating from the conductors of existing or new periodicals. To gain the ear of an editor at the start of a new paper is a great thing. Most of the staff contributors to the penny periodicals of our day are those who were fortunate enough to submit a satisfactory specimen of their work in response to the editor's original advertisement.

WORKING ONE'S WAY

A writer who has had some practical experience of a newspaper office finds it much less toilsome to travel over the thorny path of literature than an ordinary pilgrim. No successful man of letters encourages his sons to "cultivate literature upon a little oatmeal," as he himself may have done in his time. If they have a decided bent for the profession, he articles them to a newspaper editor, preferably in the provinces. With the *trade* of literature in their hands they can never want for bread. Ambitious would-be authors who are wise in their generation, no longer come up to London with the proverbial half-crown in their pockets in search of fortune and renown. Learning shorthand, they attach themselves to a newspaper in their native or some neighbouring town, and so develop into reporters, descriptive writers, sub-editors, and possibly editors. Provincial press-work is hard and poorly paid, but it affords a very useful training. Given undoubted talent, who shall say that the drudgery of a newspaper office unfits an individual for the higher walks of literature?

Mr. J. M. Barrie was a working journalist at Nottingham. Charles Dickens, S. C. Hall, Mr. Justin McCarthy, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, and many other well-known authors, commenced life as newspaper

reporters. Dr. Samuel Smiles was one time editor of the *Leeds Times*; Mr. Wilton Jones, the playwright, was for many years connected with the *Yorkshire Post*; and Hepworth Dixon roughed it in right earnest in the office of a Cheltenham paper before he rose to be the editor of the *Athenæum*. The "printer's reader" has not unfrequently developed a taste for writing. George Steevens, the Shakespearian commentator, was a "corrector for the press." J. F. M'Ardle, the famous pantomime writer of a bygone day, was employed as a "reader" at the *Universe* office; and journalistic records can supply many other instances. The compositor has also been known to turn author. Douglas Jerrold was by turns a working compositor and a printer's reader before he succeeded in establishing himself as actor, dramatist, and author. Among American writers, W. D. Howells, Bret Harte, and Mark Twain went through the newspaper mill in their early days; and, as we know, Benjamin Franklin, Artemus Ward, Horace Greeley, and James Gordon Bennett were all journeymen printers who afterwards rose to the dignity of the editorial chair.

TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE

Into the technique of journalism we need not here enter. This can only be acquired by study and experience.

Briefless barristers, and such-like gentlemen who write for the London press, fall much more readily into a journalistic style of writing than does the average author. They have been newspaper readers all their lives, and, owing to their social position, naturally bring to bear upon their work educational and other advantages which all young writers do not command. They know how to write incisively and yet exhaustively on the subject they propose to treat. They have made a special study of the newspaper article, whereas the more literary outside contributor often fails as a journalist through his lack of the technical knowledge so essential to success.

The successful journalist of to-day is the one who carefully *analyses* the articles in the particular journal for which he aspires to write. He does not send out articles to different newspapers at random. He says to himself: "Now I am going to write an article for this paper. It may hit or miss. If it miss, I shall probably have to put it on the shelf, for no other paper that I know of takes exactly the same kind of thing. But if it hit, I shall carefully follow it up until I get a footing as a regular contributor."

As a rule, a magazine article is available for most magazines of the same class; if declined by one, it may be accepted by another. Not so with a newspaper article. Nearly every journal has its own style of article, from which no departure can be

made for the benefit of a would-be contributor. Let his article be ever so good, if it be not written in strict accordance with the lines laid down—politics apart—it will be rejected.

The same rule obtains with story-journals and miscellaneous penny periodicals of all kinds. There is a distinctiveness about each of these which requires to be specially studied. A *Family Herald* story is a very different thing from a *Family Circle* story. A *London Journal* story would scarcely be accepted for the *Young Ladies' Journal*. A *Pick-Me-Up* short story would never find its way into *Tit-Bits* or *Answers*. A *Modern Society* story would be considered much too tame for the *Golden Penny*.

Unless a writer can adapt himself to the particular requirements of those several periodicals which he knows will yield him a remunerative return for his labours, all his efforts will prove abortive. He must be wonderfully versatile to have his work accepted by different papers which at the first glance appear to be all alike. In his anxiety to extend his connection, he may say to an editor (the editors of these papers are sometimes accessible): "I have written for *So-and-so* and *So and-so*; now, is there anything of a special nature I can write for you? I have had a large experience in all lines of literature." "My dear sir," replies the editor, "you may have written for any number of periodicals, but it does not follow that you can write anything to suit *me*. I can only

recommend you to study the contents of my paper, and specially prepare something in the same style on approval. If you can do what I want, I am willing to take your work; I can't say any more."

A word or two may fittingly be addressed to would-be writers of "novelettes" for that large series of journals of which the *Family Herald* is the oldest. Dialogue, more or less dramatic, and plenty of incident are always looked for. Descriptive writing must be strictly confined to boudoirs and drawing-rooms, fashionable gowns, beautiful tresses, and the natural comeliness of the hero's and heroine's features. Picturesque descriptions of natural scenery, and all attempts at delineation of character—the hall-mark of high-class fiction—must be carefully eschewed; but a careful examination of the paper to which he intends sending his work will be the best guide in this case also.

Unhappily, an author who succeeds in writing down to the requirements of this class of cheap fiction must, unless he be exceptionally gifted, bid farewell to the higher walks of literature. He will get into a rut from which he cannot extricate himself. His hopes of excelling as a novelist will be annihilated; his ambition will be quenched; his name will be unknown. Side by side, however, with these sorrows, he will have the satisfaction of earning an honest livelihood, for work of this kind is in constant demand, and stories written for all these widely-

circulated penny journals are often paid for on acceptance. It rests with a young writer to reflect seriously whether the emoluments to be derived from the pursuit of low-class fiction are a sufficient recompense for the sacrifices he must be prepared to make if his literary aspirations be high.

NEWSPAPER FICTION

As to newspaper fiction, the field open to young authors is very circumscribed. Nearly all the best fiction by well-known authors is now "syndicated" through the newspaper press of the three kingdoms. That is to say, it is bought up by speculators and companies, and disposed of for simultaneous "serial use" to different newspapers in town and country. Two of the largest organisations devoted to this kind of business are Tillotson's Newspaper Syndicate at Bolton, and the National Press Agency in Whitefriars Street. As soon as an author has made a hit with a novel, he can find constant employment by writing serial and short stories for these and other syndicates on remunerative terms. In some cases he is tempted to dispose of his entire rights in his work for a good round sum; like the late Henry Herman, whose novels, not written in collaboration with Mr. David Christie Murray, are the exclusive property of Messrs. Tillotson. The usual plan, however, is to reserve the right of publication in book

form after a stipulated period. Most of Mr. G. R. Sims's short stories are written for Messrs. Tillotson; in due course they appear in the book list of Messrs. Chatto & Windus. Volumes of short stories, like the "Cameos" of Miss Marie Corelli, are invariably their authors' collected newspaper or magazine work after the serial rights have lapsed. There is a good demand for short stories by syndicates such as that of Tillotson's, and even if, in the case of a writer not yet well known, the remuneration be not very large, it is paid promptly on acceptance; which is a material consideration with the majority of young writers.

Some successful authors find it more profitable to "syndicate" their work themselves. This is where the literary agent comes in to safeguard their interests. A busy writer cannot keep a watchful eye on every journal; the literary agent, with his newspaper files and staff of clerks, can. A Press Cutting Agency is also serviceable in checking the unwarrantable use of a novel or story by unscrupulous editors in distant country places. Some time ago one of the Press Cutting Agencies discovered that the "Queer Story" from *Truth* was being regularly "lifted" by newspaper editors in different parts of the kingdom. Mr. Labouchere was promptly informed of the proceeding, and at once took steps to put a stop to it. But all these matters affect only the author with a reputation; an unknown

writer has generally a hard battle to fight before the literary agent deigns to conduct his business for him, and before his stories are sought after by Newspaper Syndicates.

LONDON LETTERS

The "London Letter," which at one time was a profitable source of income to an industrious journalist, is now generally "syndicated" in the same way as novels and stories. Instead of manifolding the same letter for transmission to as many country papers as were willing to pay a fair price for it (about ten shillings), the London Letter writer has to choose between selling his original letter to a syndicate for a fixed sum, or finding his occupation gone. Where price is an object, country editors can now purchase from the National Press Agency a column of "stereo" for even less than it would cost to set up in type the same amount of matter on the spot. This is supposed to be the work of "Our London Correspondent," who, in such cases, exists only in the imagination. Some of the best weekly papers prefer to treat for the work of a well-known writer, as witness the chatty "Cigarette Papers" of Mr. Joseph Hatton, or "The Voice of the Flying Day," by Sir Walter Besant. In the cases of the larger provincial newspapers, it may be added that the "London Letter" is often contributed by several

people, and good well-authenticated items of news are generally acceptable for this purpose at the London offices of those journals.

THE COMIC PRESS

Under this heading little need be said. The pages of *Punch* are not open to outside contributors, for an editorial note declares that "MSS. and drawings will not be returned; not even when accompanied by stamped directed envelope."

With unsolicited contributions the editor of *Judy* will have nothing to do; they are neither acknowledged nor returned. All the comic journals, in short, employ their own staff of writers, though, when approached in the proper way, editors are glad of good comic matter. Until he has made a success with a humorous book, the work of the outside writer will probably be treated with scant respect.

The jokes in the popular periodicals of the *Bits* variety are not original. They are clipped from American newspapers and from the files of comics of a past day. Those, likewise, which appear under the head of "Wit and Humour" in the penny story-journals are copied from defunct periodicals in the British Museum. The staff contributors to *Punch*, *Judy*, *Fun*, *Moonshine*, &c., may be said to have all the "comic copy" that is worth anything in their own hands.

LADIES' MAGAZINES

Ladies' penny magazines are steadily on the increase. We have the *Domestic Life*, *Woman's Life*, *Home Notes*, *Home Chat*, *Our Home*, the *Happy Home*, and many more, all of them produced on very much the same lines. Their contents are written for ladies largely by ladies. Their stereotyped weekly features leave little room for outside contributions. Intending contributors would do well to put themselves in communication with the editor before sending in MSS.

CHRISTMAS NUMBERS

Compared with the Christmas numbers of the weekly illustrated papers, Christmas annuals are in the minority. *Diprose's Annual* is one of the few old-fashioned ones that holds its place on the book-stalls. Its contributors do not vary much from year to year; they have been associated with the *Annual* for a considerable time. Mr. John Diprose is too old-fashioned in his tastes to admit the work of a new writer to his pages. The place of honour is usually awarded to a well-known author, who, like most of the other contributors, has to exercise his ingenuity in adapting his story to the illustration he selects. That perennial miscellany, *Hood's Annual*, no longer purports to be comic. It has migrated from the office of *Fun*, and sobered down into a budget of short stories by various authors.

The pen-and-ink sketches in *Phil May's Annual* are characterised by a humour all their own. Its letterpress is more serious, and is the work of popular authors. The work of unknown writers is never requisitioned for Christmas literature, but a story of surpassing excellence *may* be accepted if it be sent in to the editor several months in advance of the festive season.

MAGAZINE VERSE

It will be noticed that nothing has been said in the foregoing pages about magazine verse. Some magazines refuse to return rejected verse in any circumstances, and this subject can be dismissed with a few words. We have all heard long ago that poetry is a drug in the market; but true poetry is rare. In the matter of verse contributions there is no medium. Minor periodicals do not pay for them at all; the best pay handsomely, often at the rate of half-a-crown a line, but rarely take anything from any but acknowledged writers of verse. Poets like the poet-laureate (Mr. Alfred Austin), Mr. Swinburne, Sir Lewis Morris, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. William Watson, Mr. John Davidson, and Mr. A. P. Graves, are able to command their own terms for the productions of their pens. *Vers de Société* is acceptable in the high-class society journals. Recitable verse of the kind popularised by Mr. G. R. Sims and Mr. Clement Scott is often a weekly newspaper feature.

Mr. Barry Pain's "Tomkins Ballads" appeared for some time at intervals in the *Daily Chronicle*, and later in the *Sun*. The ordinary run of verse in the penny comic journals is topical, and, when the writers feel in the mood for it, satirical. Young writers with a gift for this kind of versifying may be recommended to seek admission for their effusions to the provincial satirical weeklies, such as the Liverpool *Porcupine*, the Manchester *Spy*, the Birmingham *Owl*, &c., &c. The remuneration may be *nil*, but the training will be of excellent service.

RATES OF PAYMENT

Let us now turn to the commercial aspects of periodical literature. In nearly all cases it is advisable for the contributor to send in a "statement" of his accepted article, story, or poem as soon as it appears. Otherwise his honorarium may be overlooked, especially at the offices of those journals that do not openly invite outside contributions. A simple invoice, leaving the amount to be filled in by the editor, looks business-like, and obviates the necessity of writing a letter. If he subscribe to a Press Cutting agency, a notification of the title of his anonymous *accepted* article will save him the trouble of watching for its appearance; a magazine contribution, with his name to it, would of course be sent to him in the ordinary way. In spite of the editorial

warning, a contributor may take it for granted that, if he receive a proof, his article is accepted, though it may be some time before it appears. Authors who cannot afford to become subscribers to a reliable Press Cutting agency will find the process of buying papers merely to look at, or walking to the nearest public news-room, tedious, exasperating, and an expensive waste of money and time.

All the leading magazines, and most of the best journals, have a monthly settling day for contributors' accounts. The *St. James's Gazette* sends out cheques on the first day of each month; the *Pall Mall* on the eighth. Some newspapers pay weekly. The *Evening Standard* pays on a Wednesday if the "statement" reaches the office on the Monday previous; the *City Press*, always on Saturdays. The *Daily News* also clears off its accounts weekly, on Mondays; others as soon as circumstances will permit. The halfpenny evening papers enter up small accounts for payment after twelve o'clock on Saturdays; for larger amounts cheques are sent out once a month. Friday is the weekly pay-day for contributions to *Seraps*, *Snap-Shots*, the *Magnet*, the *Weekly Budget*, and other Red Lion House periodicals. Messrs. Cassell & Co. dispose of all their contributors' accounts at the month's end; Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co., on the fifteenth of each month. *Tit-Bits* and *Answers* pay on the day of publication; *Anecdotes* pays on the fifth of the month.

In all the better-class periodicals, the rate of remuneration depends entirely on the recognised status of the author and the opportuneness of the contribution. Before their illustrated rivals came to stay, the old-established monthly magazines had a uniform scale of ten shillings a page. One of the oldest of these, instead of improving, now pays its contributors at a shocking rate—substantial evidence that a magazine owned by a book-publishing house is not all profit. A pound a page was formerly the average rate at the offices of the high-class reviews. The *Nineteenth Century* pays a guinea a page; the *Theatre* half-a-guinea. The conductors of such magazines as *Pearson's* and the *Strand* never allow price to stand in the way of securing a first-rate article or story; they have no normal scale of remuneration. The work of well-known authors is in all cases a matter of arrangement; that of others is remunerated according to its intrinsic worth. Messrs. Ward, Lock, & Co. have paid upwards of a hundred pounds each for short stories by Dr. Conan Doyle, Mr. Anthony Hope, Mr. S. R. Crockett, "Ian Maclaren," and other eminent authors, in the *Windsor Magazine*; while for the British serial rights of his novel, "The Christian," they paid Mr. Hall Caine the record sum of fifteen hundred pounds. The *Yellow Book* pays so much a thousand words, according to the reputation of the writer and the commercial value of the contribution.

The *Pall Mall Magazine* rewards its contributors in a princely fashion, even those who are comparatively unknown to fame. The *Lady's Realm* boasts of enlisting the pens of "extraordinary" writers on "extraordinary" terms. Under the editorship of Mr. Max Pemberton, *Cassell's Magazine* has improved its position enormously, securing the work of well-known writers at an almost extravagant outlay. *Cornhill* recently paid six guineas for an article of as many pages on "Freemasonry," and a pound a page is the usual rate. The *Athenæum* will pay a guinea for a general contribution, say an obituary notice, of about 250 words. Its "Gossip" is purveyed at two rates, 5s. and 20s. a paragraph.

Chambers's Journal pays half-a-guinea a column for ordinary contributions; those that bear their authors' names are remunerated on a higher scale. *Household Words* pays only seven shillings a column, this sum being considered adequate for the "entire copyright" of an article! *Pearson's Weekly* has a uniform rate of two guineas a column, with a maximum of five guineas for a short story. In the case of *Home Notes* the scale is much the same; in that of *Short Stories* rather less. The *Queen* pays ordinary contributors from one guinea to a guinea and a half a column, according to the type in which articles are set. *Cassell's Saturday Journal*, *Tit-Bits*, *Answers*, the *Golden Penny*, and *Stories* pay a guinea a column; *Woman's Life*, the *Hub*, and

British Boys, according to merit. The *Boy's Own Paper* pays a pound a page of three columns. The present rate of remuneration for *Anecdotes* contributions is three halfpence a line, or about half-a-guinea a column. For the first year or two payment in a new popular periodical is generally modest.

Society journalism is perhaps of all the most profitable kind of newspaper work. *Vanity Fair* pays its contributors at varying rates, from two to ten guineas a column article, according to the "exclusiveness" of the information. A single paragraph of half-a-dozen lines is often worth the price of a couple of columns, if properly certified. In *Truth* the rate of payment depends on the contributions themselves. Paragraphs in the *World* command sixpence a line; in the *London Figaro* threepence-halfpenny. *Society* pays five shillings a column.

An accepted article in the *Spectator* or the *Saturday Review* returns its author about five guineas. The *Times* pays handsomely for an article "by a correspondent"; sometimes as much as ten or fifteen guineas. The other great dailies pay, as a rule, two guineas a column. The *Daily Mail* and the halfpenny morning papers generally pay a guinea and a half a column; the provincial dailies, a guinea. As regards the *Pall Mall Gazette*, two guineas a column is said to be the usual rate, but the present writer has frequently received payment at the rate of two and a half guineas a column (of about 2000

words). The *St. James's Gazette* pays a guinea and a half for an article, two guineas if it be made to do duty for a leader. The *Westminster Gazette* rewards its outside contributors at the rate of a guinea and a half a column; the *Echo*, a guinea a column. The "specials" in the *Evening Standard* yield their contributors two guineas each; the *Globe* "turn-overs," one guinea. For a three-quarters column in the *Daily News* the writer has received two guineas, and for a short article of one-third of a column half-a-guinea. The *Lady*, the *Gentlewoman*, and the *Lady's Pictorial* all pay at the rate of half a guinea a column. For "lining" work the *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Advertiser*, and *Daily Chronicle* pay one penny a line; the *Standard*, *Daily News*, *Times*, and *Morning Post*, three-halfpence per line. The theatrical organ, the *Era*, pays a pound a column to outsiders; "specialists" are paid much higher. For papers devoted to technical subjects in the technical press the rates usually run from 7s. to 10s. per column—thus the *Bazaar* pays 8s. and nothing for illustrations; *Gardeners' Magazine*, 10s.; *Journal of Horticulture*, 9s.; and *Plumber and Decorator*, 7s. 6d.; while the *Decorators' Gazette* pays 10s. 6d. These journals do not appeal to outsiders unless they are qualified to write on special subjects suitable for the papers mentioned. The same remark applies to the sporting press, for which writers must possess special and trained knowledge.

COPYRIGHT

Some particulars regarding the copyright of periodical literature may be profitably set forth in this place.

Considering that such a large proportion of magazine and newspaper matter ultimately finds its way into the Book Market, it is essential that authors should clearly understand how their receipt for the remuneration they receive in respect of an accepted article, story, or poem affects its re-publication in book form. The whole question lies in a nutshell. If they sign away the "entire copyright," or simply the "copyright" (which amounts to the same thing exactly), they are not at liberty to make any further use of their contributions, the "book rights of the same becoming the sole property of the proprietor of the magazine or newspaper in which they appear." Permission to include a contribution so assigned in a book, however, is generally given, when it is asked for in a formal manner, the author agreeing to acknowledge his obligations in his preface. Where the magazine or newspaper publisher is also a book publisher, he encloses a printed copyright form with every cheque he sends out; and he may decline to allow his property to appear in a book intended to be brought out by another publisher, though sometimes he will sell back the rights so assigned for a sum nearly equal to that which

he originally paid. Messrs. Sampson Low & Co.; Messrs. Cassell & Co.; Messrs. Ward, Lock, & Co.; Messrs. S. W. Partridge & Co.; the Religious Tract Society; Mr. James Henderson, and many other publishers claim the "entire copyright" of everything that appears in their various periodicals. Other publishers there are who, though they do not publish books, secure the entire rights of the work of their contributors in order to re-sell it. The proprietors of *Black and White* and the *Ludgate Magazine* do a large business with their copyrights in this way. Well-known authors never part with their copyrights, save under exceptionally advantageous circumstances. Mr. Grant Allen has a printed slip, notifying to editors that the accompanying MS. can only be used in the particular periodical or journal to which it is addressed, the book rights of the contribution being reserved by the author. Such a stipulation on the part of a new writer, or his refusal to sign a copyright form after his article has appeared, would not be productive of good results.

On the other hand, where no mention is made of copyright on the receipt form, where the author has his own "statement" sent to him with the cheque for signature, he is at perfect liberty to use his article or story again in a book. Of course there is such a thing as complimenting an editor by asking his consent to the proceeding, and acknowledging in

a prefatory note where the papers or stories may have originally appeared, when a contributor collects his fugitive articles and stories into a book. Unless the proprietor of a periodical has in view the separate issue of certain articles and stories which have served their purpose in his columns, he generally allows his contributors to make what further profit they can out of their work. Still, he likes it to be mentioned that such and such articles or stories appeared first of all in his columns. If the periodical be one of good standing, this acknowledgment is in itself a recommendation for the author's book. Besides, readers have a right to know that its contents are reprints. For this reason a frank admission that certain stories are reprints, and certain others are new to print (if any such there be), is in all cases desirable for the author's own sake. The actual periodical in which the work originally appeared need not necessarily be mentioned.

With regard to the duration of the copyright of periodical work, one important fact must be noted. Where the author reserves the copyright to himself, it endures as long as that of a book, but if he assign it to the publisher, it reverts to him after a period of twenty-eight years. If, however, the publisher in the meantime re-issues his acquired property in book form, the author has no further claim upon it. But it should be expressly understood that unless the author willingly sells such copyright for re-

publication in book form, that is to say, unless it be so stated on the assignment or receipt, no publisher or proprietor can make such second use of any contributor's work. Generally speaking, the copyright of an article or a story appearing in a daily, weekly, or monthly magazine or journal belongs to the proprietor of such publication for six months only, when it reverts to the author. This is the absolute *custom*. A mere penny-receipted form for cash for an article is useless to secure rights or copyrights to any one. An assignment of copyright must be made in due legal form to be of any value. The copyright of all *newspaper* articles (and all publications that are registered at Stationers' Hall and the General Post Office as newspapers) belongs always to the writer. Proprietors only pay for the *use* of articles, not the copyright.

Publishers who accept a series of technical articles usually make a point of securing the copyrights, whether they intend to re-issue them in book form or not. Such are Messrs. John Dicks & Co., who modestly claim on their receipts the English and foreign copyrights; and Mr. L. Upcott Gill, who often republishes the serials after they have run through the *Bazaar*. These firms will also usually pay a lump sum for a series in preference to paying by the column. This, of course, has its advantages for both seller and purchaser.

Provided that authors comply with the conditions

prescribed below,¹ the editors of the following newspapers, journals, and magazines state that they will consider MSS. submitted to them, and that they will make every effort to return unsuitable contributions.

Academy, 27 Chancery Lane, W.C.

Answers, Tudor Street, E.C.

Antiquary, 62 Paternoster Row, E.C.

Argosy, Sub-Editor, 8 New Burlington Street, E.C.

Black and White, 33 Bouverie Street, E.C.

Boy's Own Paper, 56 Paternoster Row, E.C.

Cassell's Family Magazine, "La Belle Sauvage," Ludgate Hill, E.C.

Century Magazine, 29 and 30 Bedford Street, Strand.

Chambers's Journal, 339 High Street, Edinburgh.

Chapman's Magazine of Fiction, 11 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden.

Chatterbox, 3 Paternoster Buildings, E.C.

Cornhill Magazine, 15 Waterloo Place, Pall Mall.

English Illustrated Magazine, 198 Strand, W.C.

Family Herald, 421 Strand, W.C.

Gentleman's Magazine, 111 St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

Great Thoughts, 28 Hutton Street, Fleet Street, E.C.

Globe, 367 Strand, W.C.

Golden Penny, 194 Strand, W.C.

Good Words, 15 and 16 Tavistock Street, W.C.

Idler, 111 St. Martin's Lane, W.C.

Longman's Magazine, 39 Paternoster Row, E.C.

Macmillan's Magazine, 29 & 30 Bedford St., Covent Garden.

Monthly Magazine of Fiction, 421 Strand, W.C.

New Century Review, Oxford.

¹ Manuscripts should in all cases be type-written, on one side of the paper only, and addressed to the editor; the name and address of the sender should be clearly written on the MS. itself, as well as on the stamped envelope, which should invariably be enclosed in order to ensure its return.

In no case does the editor hold himself responsible for MSS. sent to him, nor can he be expected to enter into correspondence with contributors on the subject of their contributions. It is often advisable before forwarding a MS., to send a note to the editor, asking him if it is likely to be acceptable. The editor of *Longman's Magazine* makes this suggestion.

New Review, 21 Bedford Street, Strand.
Pall Mall Gazette, 18 Charing Cross Road, W.C.
Pall Mall Magazine, 18 Charing Cross Road, W.C.
Pearson's Magazine, Henrietta Street, W.C.
Pearson's Weekly, Henrietta Street, W.C.
Queen, Bream's Buildings, W.C.
Short Stories, Henrietta Street, W.C.
Stories, 36 Essex Street, Strand, W.C.
Strand Magazine, Southampton Street, Strand.
Sun, Sun Buildings, Tudor Street, E.C.
Sunday at Home, 56 Paternoster Row, E.C.
Sunday Magazine, 15 and 16 Tavistock Street, W.C.
Sunday Times, 46 Fleet Street, E.C.
Temple Bar, 8 New Burlington Street, W.
Temple Magazine, Temple House, Temple Avenue, E.C.
Tit-Bits, Southampton Street, Strand.
To-day, Howard House, Arundel Street, Strand.
Weekly Budget, Red Lion Court, Fleet Street, E.C.
Westminster Gazette, Tudor Street, E.C.
Windsor Magazine, Warwick House, Salisbury Sq., E.C.
Yellow Book, Bodley Head, Vigo Street, W.

It will be seen that the great dailies are not included in this list. The reason is, that such papers are for the most part independent of chance contributors, and employ a regular staff of trained journalists and reporters. Similarly, the weekly illustrated papers, such as *The Graphic*, *Illustrated London News*, and *The Sketch*, are largely supplied from regular sources.

There is a third class of periodicals, including many of the most important quarterlies and reviews which offer no encouragement to "outsiders," but rather give it to be understood that their productions are only an encumbrance by refusing to acknowledge or return unsolicited manuscripts. Under this head may be classed *The Fortnightly Review*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Saturday Review*, *Speaker*, and *Spectator*.

III

PLAYS

PLAYWRITING

PLAYWRITING is in these days by far the most remunerative form of literary effort. The rewards of successful dramatic authorship, resulting from the changed conditions of theatrical affairs, act as a powerful incentive to writing for the stage. Nevertheless, though the would-be playwrights are many, the accepted ones—those of recognised position—are necessarily few. To write a good play is no ordinary achievement. The genius of the dramatist is totally different from that of the novelist. This is why novelists so often fail when they attempt a play. Nor are they more successful at dramatising their own works. They generally only attain the wished-for result by collaborating with an experienced playwright.

Provided they possess the requisite constructive ability, which is all-important in dramatic work, actors and stage-managers are much better qualified for playwriting than men of letters, while as colla-

borators they are invaluable. They may not be able to write a poetical play or a high-class comedy, they may be—as they generally are—lacking in originality; but they understand how to work up telling situations and effective tableaux, they know when to bring down the curtain at the right moment. Few people outside a theatre have the remotest conception of the stage-manager's share in the production of a new play; of the wholesale excisions he makes in the author's text; of the many alterations and transpositions he recommends, always with benefit.

The stage is an excellent school for young dramatists. The late Sir Augustus Harris, Dion Boucicault, Mr. Wilson Barrett, Mr. Coghlan, Mr. Carton, Mr. A. W. Pinero, Miss Clo Graves, Mr. Brandon Thomas, Mr. Mark Melford, Mr. W. Lestocq, Mr. Harry Nicholls, Mr. Jerome K. Jerome, Mr. Adair Fitz-Gerald, Mr. Charles Brookfield, and the present writer, to name but a few, and many others, acquired their practical knowledge of stage-craft behind the footlights: they were actors first and playwrights afterwards.

COLLABORATION

Paul Meritt and Henry Pettitt owed their success to a master of dramatic construction, Mr. George Conquest. They were originally clerks in the City. Too wise to eschew the assistance of Mr.

Conquest in the construction of their dramas, they wrote, singly or in partnership with him, for many years, and in the end made their fortunes. But for their practical training at the Grecian Theatre the result might have been very different. Of course, they were only authors of popular melodrama

There can be no doubt that dramatic collaboration is fraught with the most satisfactory results. Unity is strength, and two heads are better than one. Our French neighbours appreciate this to the full; for while they have long written in collaboration, it is only within recent years we have grown accustomed to see two, sometimes three, authors' names adorn a play-bill in England.

There are various kinds of collaboration. One is where two authors of equal eminence or obscurity divide the labour of constructing and writing a play throughout. If it happen that one author has a special faculty for inventing a plot and working out a *scenario*, he looks to the other to fill in the dialogue. Thus "plot, story, and construction" was Henry Herman's share of his collaboration in "The Silver King," "Chatterton," "Claudian," and "The Golden Band." The parcelling out of the dialogue depends largely upon the individual gifts of the collaborators. Some authors are at their best in furnishing the comedy element, others excel in writing emotional scenes, and so on.

Sometimes, when a play from the pen of a new,

or a comparatively new writer has been accepted, the manager arranges with the author for an experienced constructor to give it a few finishing touches and the support of his name as "part-author," as a sop to the critics. The wisdom of such a proceeding is not always apparent to the author, thus expected to share his fees with another; but some sacrifice must perforce be made to obtain a public hearing for an initial work. Still, these tactics are nowadays rarely resorted to. Afterwards, if the play hold the stage, he can stand on his dignity and dictate his own terms; for commissions will then pour in upon him.

As a rule, recognising the difficulties in the way of getting a play produced, authors are only too ready to invite an established playwright, a prominent actor, or an influential manager to figure as "part-author" of the play they have written, for commercial reasons. Actors and managers have, however, apparently outlived the craze for posing as dramatic authors, and if they accept an author's first play they do not begrudge him the honours that are his due.

As for established playwrights, they do not care to lend their names to the work of unknown scribes, good as it may be. Occasionally, it is true, where a play is distinguished by extraordinary merit or originality, they may agree to rewrite it after their own fashion, and allow the author a fair share of

the proceeds. On the whole, however, a well-known author only regards a would-be playwright's offer of this kind as an impertinence. A hint at collaboration should always be allowed to come from the other side.

The advantages of collaborating with a manager having his own theatre and company are obvious. The late Sir Augustus Harris, for instance, was much too busy a man to *write* any portion of a play himself, but his conception of the smallest details of a stage picture was not more remarkable than his invention and constructive ability.

MELODRAMA

Thanks to the introduction of the Bruce-Smith mechanical scenery, and the effective massing of stage-crowds (a lesson strongly impressed upon English managers by the Meiningen Court Company at Drury Lane Theatre in 1881), the tone of our latter-day melodrama has been greatly raised. The old drama of this kind has been superseded by that of a kindred form at once more realistic and picturesque. Yet, though the simple domestic drama, employing few characters and a mere handful of auxiliaries, has entirely gone out, its essentials have been retained.

To write a melodrama on entirely new lines would be a fatal experiment. "Virtue rewarded and villany defeated" is the only policy that brings grist

to the melodramatic author's mill. Poetical justice is a *sine quâ non* in prosy melodrama. Without it the most stirring incidents would fall flat, the whole entertainment would be disappointing. There must, too, be no half-measures in the character delineation. The hero must be immaculate, the villain a thorough-paced rascal.

One great thing never to be forgotten by the author of melodrama is to take the audience into his confidence touching the personality of the real criminal throughout the action of the play. Theatrical audiences will not tolerate mysteries, like the readers of modern detective stories; unless they see a crime actually committed, they cannot be expected to sympathise with the hero when he is arrested on a false charge.

A melodrama is the most mechanical species of stage-play. Given a good plot, involving an ingenious shuffling up of the *dramatis personæ*, some constructive ability, and the faculty of writing terse, dramatic dialogue, an author can turn out an effective melodrama where another kind of play may be altogether beyond his powers. Successful melodramatic authors generally fail when they attempt a society play, a comedy, or a three-act farce; and, conversely, authors who have distinguished themselves in the higher walks of dramatic art are rarely successful in strong drama. The melodrama is the lowest form of dramatic art.

OTHER PLAYS

No strict lines can be laid down for a play other than a melodrama. This is where the genius of the dramatist asserts itself. In a romantic play like "Clancarty," an historical play like "Twixt Axe and Crown," a society play, a high-class comedy, or a farcical comedy, conventionality finds no place. The mechanical sandwiching of the serious and comedy interest is not practicable. The entire framework of the play must be built up, scene by scene, before the dialogue is thought of. There is no such thing as writing the first act before the second is sketched out, as can be done in a melodrama. The scenario (*i.e.* the consecutive arrangement of the action, the "entrances" and "exits," and the substance of the dialogue between the different sets of characters), must be drafted out on paper from the rising of the curtain to the final going down of the same.

Nor is this all. The perfection to which the mounting of modern high-class plays, and even farces, has attained, renders it necessary for the dramatist to avoid changes of scenery, to make an elaborate "interior set" serve for an act. This calls for skilled workmanship on the part of the author. The action must be confined to a single scene, introducing all the characters necessary to the progress

of the story. "One scene, one act," is a cardinal point to be observed by the modern playwright. The accessories of a well-appointed drawing-room cannot easily be cleared away in view of the audience by mechanical aids, and to drop the curtain for a few minutes is but a clumsy contrivance.

COSTUME AND MILLINERY PLAYS

Fashionable millinery, as well as upholstery, must be provided for by the modern playwright. In melodrama, an actress may not object to appear in the meanest of garments: not so in a society play or a comedy. Mr. H. Sutherland Edwards tells the story how he was once asked to write a play for a society actress. He set to work with a will, and sent her the MS. This was the result of the negotiations: "I like it immensely. I think it is perfectly lovely; it is just the kind of part I should like to play. But it would be of no use whatever to me, as I could only change my dress in it three times!"

Authors who write plays for leading actors and actresses must be prepared to pander to their little fancies. The present writer once had a costume play declined by an actor-manager on the ground that playing the principal character would compel him to sacrifice his moustache! There is a great deal of writing plays to order in these days, of fitting actors with parts suited to their capacity. It has

always been a difficult matter to get a play accepted on its all-round merits; but if an author can exactly fit an actor-manager with a part to stand out prominently from all the other characters, his *débüt* as a dramatist will be assured; that is, if he can get the ear of the right actor, and then the play must be almost perfect from the manager's point of view, or the piece will be rejected. To get any play accepted in London is a feat of itself, and managers very seldom take the trouble to suggest alterations in the work of unknown writers.

FITTING PLAYS TO ACTORS

Success awaits the author who can write a thoroughly practicable play round a prominent actor or actress. Whereas managers of the old school identified with particular theatres are now few and far between, actor-managers temporarily in possession of a theatre for the run of a single play which has received the hall-mark of public approval, are largely on the increase. Every actor who has made a name for himself in his chosen line is ambitious to exploit a play on his own account. A play with a "fat" part in it for himself—to "suit him down to the ground," as the saying is—he is willing to secure at any time; and more readily from an outsider than from a practised hand, because he knows the latter will not write on speculation, while in any case his

terms would be extravagantly high. Playgoers do not concern themselves about the authorship of a play: it is only unprogressive managers who cling to the old-fashioned notion that a play by an unknown author must be worthless.

One great disadvantage under which an author, writing an actor's show-piece on approval, labours is that, if the play when it is finished does not sufficiently hit the actor's fancy to encourage him to produce it, he may never meet with another actor suited for the part. He will be saddled with it for an indefinite period—it may be for years and it may be for ever—as a useless thing.

The writing of a play, then, dependent upon the whims and fancies of an actor, is not unattended with risks. It is much more difficult to write an actor's show-piece than an all-round play with the parts well balanced. But the negotiation of an actor's show-piece is easy compared with that of any other kind of play. Actors not already in possession of a theatre have facilities for exploiting a new play which an unknown author can never command. They enter into partnership with a manager who has been obliged to fall back upon a stop-gap; they cast about them for a "backer" or a syndicate to put them into management after the play they have secured has been tested in some out-of-the-way place—as "Charley's Aunt" was tested at Bury St. Edmunds—with a scratch company.

GETTING PLAYS ACCEPTED

An all-round play submitted to a manager in the usual way rarely meets with acceptance. Many West End managers nowadays read, or profess to read, new plays, but unless he has a friend at court, or some influence, the young author stands very little chance of getting a hearing. Others systematically treat the work of unknown authors with scant respect. And it has always been so. Many of the finest plays the stage has seen were hawked about for years before they inspired confidence in the breast of a manager.

Even when a play is accepted, its production may be indefinitely postponed. One of the most pitiable chapters in Isaac D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature" is that devoted to the life of Eliza Ryves. The production of her play was delayed until, borne down by want, she died of a broken heart.

How often do we find the impending production of a new play industriously paragraphed in the newspapers, followed by the news that the manager has changed his mind, that the piece is "off," or its production indefinitely postponed! There is a world of woe for the unseen dramatist in these managerial toyings. After having his hopes raised to the highest pitch, he returns to the obscurity whence he sprang, his play "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung."

As will presently be seen, there is now a decided

opening for curtain-raisers of a particular kind ; but the difficulties of getting a play (that is not an actor's show-piece) accepted have been emphasised and increased by the changed conditions of theatrical affairs during the last decade. Time was when an author could send in his play to any one of the London theatres, and at least expect it to be read. That day has gone by. With the abolition of the old stock companies, and the development of the touring system, the chances of a play from the pen of a new writer finding its way on to the boards are very remote. The minor theatres and the provinces are no longer so many schools for actors and playwrights. There are, in fact, no minor theatres. The outlying theatres are placed on the same footing as those in the provinces, being visited week by week by companies travelling with an established West End success. Instead of working up their way from humble beginnings, authors must now aim at achieving a West End triumph at the outset. If they cannot write a good, well-balanced play up to the St. James's standard, they will have a hard uphill fight to place their work with a manager on its all-round merits. And they must be sure that they know *how* to write a play.

Actors' show-pieces are the order of the day. "The Lights of London" was to a great extent a romantic actor's show-piece, and on this account it was accepted by Mr. Wilson Barrett, after its author

had tried in vain to get it produced at the Pavilion Theatre and elsewhere. Mr. Haddon Chambers is said to have interested Mr. Tree in his "Captain Swift," and actually read him the MS. while the pair of them were taking their ease in the cooling-room of a Turkish bath. It is a standing joke with the author how he got his play accepted through "freezing on" to Mr. Tree in this manner. In the theatrical profession *par excellence* opportunity is everything.

An author would find it useless to submit the plan of a play to an actor-manager in the first instance. Actors can only judge a good part when they have it before them, and then their judgment will be largely biassed by its strength.

The outside dramatist must needs have seen the actor he would fit with a part in his most successful impersonations; he must be conversant with his histrionic range and his tricks of style. He must have his play written out from first to last before he opens up negotiations. Moreover, it must be typed or printed, for actors will not read manuscript. This done, the time is ripe for him to give the actor the first hint of the play designed for him. He should address him on the subject briefly and to the point, something after this style:—

"DEAR SIR,—I have written a play which, I think, would suit you. It is a farcical comedy in three acts [*or as the case may be*]. The leading

character stands out prominently from all the rest. If you will kindly authorise me to do so, I shall be happy to send it to you for consideration at leisure. The MS. has been type-written. —I remain, &c.”

Such a communication will scarcely fail to elicit a reply conveying the actor's desire to see the play. It should be sent *by registered post*. It may or may not be acknowledged; in all probability it will not. If the play come up to his expectations, if his own part be a “fat” one, and the play itself a creditable piece of workmanship, his enthusiasm will not find vent until he has publicly tested it in action, say, at an Experimental Matinée. He may cause it to be copyrighted by a few of his associates at a hired theatre, and then set to work improving and perfecting it before inviting the critics to pass judgment upon it. On the other hand, if he do not like the play, if the principal character be not quite to his fancy, he will have nothing to do with it. He will be perfectly candid with the author. “The piece is all right; but I can't see myself in the part.” “I have read your play, and don't see enough catch in it to tempt me to produce it.” “It is not the kind of part I should expect to make a hit in.” This is how he expresses himself. There is about him none of that unctuous “regret” so characteristic of the book publisher or the magazine editor.

Disappointed as the author may be over his first failure, he can but try again in another direction. His search need not be limited to the "star" performers at the West End houses. There are many leading actors touring the provinces, or "resting"—which is the professional term for wanting an engagement. He will find these readily enough by consulting the *Era* and the *Stage*.

Should all his negotiations result in failure, two courses are open to him. He must either allow his work to lie unprofitably on his hands, or else get it produced at his own expense. An ambitious author may have to write half-a-dozen plays before he can turn out a marketable article. Addressing ordinary managers for leave to send his play would only result in the reply: "All our arrangements are made"—the usual white lie.

MATINÉE PERFORMANCES

If his confidence in the merits of his work be unbounded, the author may decide to put it to a practical test by hiring a theatre and engaging a company for a special matinée performance. In the ordinary course, this experiment will cost him upwards of a hundred pounds. The theatre, including gas, orchestra, working staff, and attendants will represent twenty or thirty pounds, and the company about five pounds per head. Actors and actresses of

mediocre talent would not inspire confidence among the critics. A competent stage-manager and an energetic business-manager are of the first importance. Then, of course, there are the incidental expenses of advertising, without which the needful publicity could not be given to the event.

Inexperienced as he must be in theatrical affairs, the author, able and willing to risk such a substantial sum in the hope of wooing Fortune with his cherished play, would be well advised to place the arrangement of the *matinée* in the hands of a first-class acting-manager. Avoid agents as the plague. It stands to reason that any well-known business manager who advertises himself "at liberty" would be able to put the matter through at much less cost than an agent; because an agent naturally stipulates for high salaries to swell his commission thereon. Though the author may have a certain actor in his mind for the principal character, he cannot suitably cast the play without professional assistance.

In any case, he will be wise to court some reliable opinion on the play before risking his money upon it. Not by sending his MS. to eminent actors. Actors' opinions of a play are usually most unreliable. Their report upon a play submitted to them is generally favourable, if there is a part therein likely to suit themselves. Second and third rate actors out of an engagement would be only

too ready to persuade him to produce it from motives of self-interest. An experienced stage-manager is, in this case, the author's best friend. An offer of a guinea fee for an honest expression of opinion made to a regularly engaged stage-manager, who does not expect to make anything further out of the production, is always a safe investment. Let the author beware of literary societies, authors' agents, theatrical agents, and others who advertise their willingness to read and revise MSS.

The experimental *matinée* is not nearly as fashionable as heretofore. And, indeed, the policy of submitting a new play to public criticism in its raw state is not to be commended, especially when the burden of the cost falls upon the author's own shoulders. Rarely does any one take any interest in a trial *matinée* except the author himself. "It's only a *matinée*; the piece may never be heard of again!" This is too often the expression of those who are paid to do their best. After the play has been cast, rehearsals are set on foot. One should have about fourteen rehearsals of a new play; yet those which the *matinée*-giver has at his command are obviously of the fewest. Nor can he always rely upon assembling his company on the same boards, since the stage of the hired theatre may be required by the resident manager. Another of his worries is that he rarely succeeds in getting all the members of the company together. It is too often the custom

for the principals to put in an excuse for their non-attendance on more or less legitimate grounds. Having only been "lent" for the purpose of the experimental *matinée* by their respective managers, they are not altogether their own masters. It so happens that there is a special *matinée* at their own theatre, or it may be at the Crystal Palace, or down at Brighton. The part has consequently to be read for them; and though "it'll be all right at night!" as the stock phrase has it, the author has his misgivings. For these combined reasons not one play out of twenty produced at an experimental *matinée* ever turns out a success; it would be little short of a miracle if it did. The *matinée*-giver loses his money, and no one cares.

How different is the result where a new play is put up by a manager already in possession of a theatre! In such a case the company work together with might and main, well knowing that if the play go into the evening bill lucrative engagements will be found for them all. The experimental *matinée* has its uses of course, but it has ceased to be fashionable. Even managers appear to have lost faith in it. They have discovered other ways and means of testing a new play in action. They have come to recognise the potent truth that if a play is worth doing in London at all, it is worth doing well—much better than is possible at an experimental *matinée*. Provincial audiences are not so exacting

in the matter of an elaborate *mise-en-scène*. They are flattered by a "first performance on any stage" by a company specially brought down from London for the purpose, or by a competent touring company happening to be visiting their town. On the score of economy there is much to be said for the new arrangement, and there is no reason why authors should not follow the lead of the managers.

SECURING COPYRIGHT

A stage-play must be publicly performed to secure the copyright. The *modus operandi* is as follows. A literal copy of the MS., with or without the stage directions, must be deposited with the Licenser of Plays at the Lord Chamberlain's Office, Stable Yard, St. James's Palace, seven clear days before the advertised production of the play. It must be accompanied by the usual fee—a guinea if the play be in one act, two guineas if in two or more acts. To be valid, the performance must take place in a theatre or public hall fully licensed for stage-plays, and the particular theatre or hall must be cited on the MS. The MS. and the fee must be forwarded by the actual manager of the theatre or hall, as the performing licence will not be granted to any other person. Big "D's" and the name of the Deity must not be spoken on the stage, except once or twice in the piece, the words "cursed"

and "heaven" being substituted, in pursuance of the Lord Chamberlain's order. A play that contains nothing of an anti-religious or immoral tendency will be licensed as a matter of course. If it be in the slightest degree "risky," it may have to be rewritten and submitted again.

A bald caricature of a living personage is not permitted in a play. If the person thus held up to ridicule be a member of the Ministry, or some other well-known character in the political world, the licenser of plays may refuse the licence. Or if, as was the case with "The Happy Land," the true nature of the burlesque be only revealed by the "make up" of the actors on the first night, the Lord Chamberlain can instantly suppress the performance under a threat of revoking the manager's theatre licence. A recital of the marriage service, too, is prohibited on the stage. If the playwright find it necessary to introduce a wedding scene in a church (or, say, at a registrar's office), he must take good care to interrupt the proceedings before a word of the marriage service is spoken. Sometimes the prohibition is artfully evaded. A certain actor-dramatist, travelling with his own company, actually introduced a church wedding in its entirety as the last act of his play after it was licensed; but he wisely confined his performances to the provinces.

Next comes the copyrighting of the play. This is effected by a single public performance at the

theatre or hall mentioned on the licensing copy. One bill posted outside the theatre, and one person paying for admission, does not satisfy the requirements of the copyright law. This foolish attempt at copyrighting has been followed many times of late, but in a court of law it would not hold good. The Act expressly states that copyright commences from the first *public* performance. Therefore, the performance must be advertised beforehand, and the general public must be invited to attend on the usual terms of payment. To charge a prohibitive price to the public, such as offering seats at a guinea each on the day that the said performance is supposed to be given, is only to evade the law, and to fail to secure copyright (5 and 6 Vict., c. 45, sec. 3; 3 and 4 Will. IV., c. 15. Theatrical managers who resort to these childish tactics will one day get bitten by the astute rogue.

The law recognises no rights in a play until it has been *produced*. The mere fact of a single public performance secures to the author or his assigns the copyright in full. If anticipated in regard to the performance, he can only seek redress in a court of law. Registration at Stationers' Hall is quite unnecessary unless his rights are infringed. In such an event, he can pay the usual five shillings, and enter his claim to the copyright at any time before the case comes into court. The

law states clearly that a book, a play, &c., must be entered at Stationers' Hall, but no time-limit is specified.

PLAY-TITLES

The title of a play cannot be secured except by a public copyright *performance*. It is extremely difficult to find original titles for new plays, and the difficulty is, day by day, increasing. Authors and managers who have hit upon a happy title frequently withhold it until the eleventh hour, lest some one else should appropriate it by running up a scratch copyright performance for the purpose. Messrs. A. & S. Gatti resorted to the unprecedented expedient of copyrighting the title of "London Day by Day," by performing the first act of the drama as a curtain-raiser one night, much to the surprise of their patrons. Titles of plays that have failed cannot be used by other playwrights except by arrangement with their lawful owners. Not until the copyright of a play has lapsed does its title become public property.

Titles of novels that have never been dramatised may freely be used, as also titles of music-hall "sketches," which are illegitimate stage-plays, not being licensed in the usual way. On the other hand, the use of a play-title for a music-hall "sketch" is an infringement which can be at once put a stop to by the author or assignee of the play. All the

same, though the "artistes" he engages own the "sketches," the manager is held responsible. Authors are perfectly justified in asserting their claims to a copyright play-title, but before doing so they should be careful to have their entry at Stationers' Hall in order. If, by the way, the original title of a play is changed after production, it must be retained as a sub-title, or else the play will have to be re-licensed.

The only reliable record of play-titles for consultation by an author is the "Era Almanack," which gives the titles of all new plays produced in the United Kingdom during the current year. An author residing in the country might with advantage commission some one in London to look through the bound volumes of the Almanack, which dates from 1868 only, and the *Biographia Dramatica* (1782) in the British Museum reading-room on his behalf. The *Era* and the *Stage* publish monthly lists of newly-produced plays. Authors cannot be too particular over their choice of a safe title.

SIMULTANEOUS PRODUCTION

Like the publication of a book, an English play must be produced simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic, to safeguard the copyright in the United States, and *vice versa*. Plays originally produced in America are not copyright in this country, as

many authors have discovered to their cost. This accounts for the stealthy performance in America of so many plays for copyright purposes on the same date as that fixed by the English manager. Authors should be very careful not to allow a spare copy of their play to fall into strange hands before it has been copyrighted, or they may find themselves fore-stalled on "the other side," and by that they would be liable to forfeit the English rights also.

PRODUCING IN THE PROVINCES

Of course, a mere copyright performance of his play does not afford the author the smallest idea of its commercial value. That can only be established by adequate representation. The modern plan, as has been said, in lieu of an experimental *matinée* or a first-night production, is to exploit a new play with a London company at some provincial theatre hired for the week. In the course of these half-dozen performances the shortcomings of the play can be detected and remedied before it is judged fit to be submitted to the London critics. In some cases a new play is got into full working order on a regular tour.

Rather than incur the cost, the worry, and the possible failure of an experimental *matinée*, an author compelled to produce his play himself would do well to treat with a manager touring with a similar kind

of play as his own for a trial performance of his work in a provincial town on an off-night of the week. A few pounds would cover all expenses. Actors on tour are ready enough to vary the monotony of playing the same part night after night all the year round by studying a new one. In these circumstances they would be satisfied with a nominal honorarium for their services. Perhaps a dinner or a supper at an hotel, to commemorate the event, would meet the case. The resident manager could have no great objection to the arrangement, and if a little local patronage were brought to bear upon it, the receipts would probably be in excess of those of an ordinary night. In the event of the play proving a success, the author could give the touring manager the first refusal of the *provincial* rights, carefully reserving the London rights for himself. Or, instead of defraying the initial costs of the production, he might agree to give him, as a *quid-pro quo*, the option of performing the play for a stated term without paying the usual fees. In that case the manager would do everything in his power to make the production a success.

These observations, however, are applicable only to farcical pieces, light comedies, and society plays, requiring a small cast of characters and no special mounting. A heavy melodrama cannot well be staged for the first time by a touring manager. The author of such a play who has a little money at his

command must become for the time being his own manager. If he cannot prevail upon a suburban manager to join him in the enterprise, he must arrange with a resident manager in a country town to fill in a vacant week with his play, performed by his own company, specially engaged for the production. To put the matter through properly and economically, he will require, first of all, a competent stage-manager, and what the Americans call a "live man" for a business manager. The local manager will, if he enter into negotiations at all, find the theatre, orchestra, working staff, attendants, and out-door advertising on the usual sharing terms, the author on his part paying the company their salaries and the cost of the picture-posters.

If the play be a success, the author will receive offers for it from touring managers, or he can send it on tour himself, with the assistance of a "backer." This would be the natural outcome of a play successfully produced in town or country. The larger the town, and the better the theatre, the greater will be the competition for the play. A London success is generally snapped up as soon as the press notices have appeared.

BURLESQUES

A burlesque is rarely exploited on the author's own account. Costume plays are always expensive to mount. The present writer once composed the music for a burlesque produced in a Lancashire town. The author was a University spark with considerably more money than theatrical experience. He exchanged the one for the other in a brief week, and came back to London a wiser and a sadder man. His enterprise proved disastrous to every one concerned, the composer alone excepted. The money he spent in the purchase of costumes would have fed his actors—who never received their salaries—for months. He went to work without seeking advice, and paid dearly for his folly.

Burlesque in these days is a very different thing from what it was. The more modern types of burlesque depend for their attractiveness upon song, dance, and chorus, with ingenious groupings of "lovely girls," and the exhibition of vivid contrasts and incongruities. The proper function of a burlesque is to caricature the conventionalities of the drama, as that of a travesty is to caricature a particular play and the mannerisms of its principal exponents. One of the finest burlesques ever written, "Bombastes Furioso," is also one of the oldest; it holds the stage even now, because it ridicules everything in general, and nothing in particular. Modern

burlesque is at the best a "variety show" with scenic accessories. In its latest form there is just the thread of a story to give it the semblance of a play, but any number of songs, dances, and "variety turns" can be introduced in the go-as-you-please style at the manager's own sweet will.

MUSICAL PIECES

The author who aspires to write a "musical play" for production in London must, unless he have a reputation, be prepared to introduce a financier. Managers have grown wise in their generation; they no longer risk their own money in theatrical enterprise. Theatres like the Gaiety are now in the hands of Limited Liability Companies, and their erstwhile lessees are simply managing directors. A Gaiety author is chosen by the managing director, and he usually has to write to order, and to fit certain actors with certain parts, none but experienced librettists and skilful constructors being engaged. Any author with a capitalist at his back need only go to a good agent or a well-known acting-manager, and the production of his play is certain. Provincial successes are in a large number of cases financed in London by City speculators.

The success of an author's work in a comic or grand opera depends to a vast extent on the popularity of the composer associated with him. If the composer hold no recognised position in the musical

world, their joint work may never be produced. An opera librettist should be chary of throwing in his lot with an unknown musician on sharing terms. If he sell him his libretto, that is a different matter. The field open to the librettist would seem to be a large one, since every musical director and song composer cherishes an ambition to compose an opera. No kind of literary composition is so wearying to the flesh and mortifying to the spirit as the writing of an opera libretto to a musician's order. Musicians' artistic fancies often prompt them to play sad havoc with an author's lyrics. There is always some pet quaver which they *will* insist on introducing in the wrong place, to the detriment of the libretto. It never occurs to them that the alteration of a word to suit their caprice necessitates the re-adjustment of the author's lines, it may be of the entire stanza, for the sake of the rhyme. With them their music is the first consideration; the libretto may be chopped about without the least regard to the fitness of things. This is why the "book" of an opera will not bear criticism as a literary work; the most capable librettists have to sacrifice their lyrics to the capricious tastes of the composer. An opera is frequently run by a firm of music publishers. For this reason an author would do well to write his libretto independently of a composer, and then try to dispose of it to a music-publishing house, who would get it set by an eminent composer. According.

to the *Era*, Mr. S. J. Adair Fitz-Gerald wrote his libretto of the "Bric-à-Brac Will" to order, and to music already composed a year and more before it was put on the stage at the Lyric Theatre. The number of opera-scores constantly going the rounds of theatrical managers in search of acceptance is very great; hence their librettists are doomed to disappointment long and dire, because the composers cannot find a market for them. Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Sidney Jones, Dr. Osmond Carr, and Mr. Ivan Caryll are about the only composers able to "place" an opera to the best advantage. Authors without musical knowledge had better leave opera libretti alone.

PANTOMIMES

A pantomime is a kind of stage-play that should not be written on speculation. It must be written to a manager's order. Pantomime authors who find their work remunerative are now few and far between. Some of the best provincial pantomimes are London successes of former years, produced with the original scenery (touched-up) and dresses at second-hand. Others are old "books" written up to date by local authors, generally pressmen. The present writer, for example, not long ago turned one of J. R. Planché's fairy extravaganzas into a modern pantomime for a Sunderland manager.

A pantomime partakes of the character of a melodrama, in that the writing thereof is purely

mechanical. The author must be able to work in the most heterogeneous materials. Acrobats, strong men, negro minstrels, solo instrumentalists, sensation dancers, and music-hall comedians must all be provided with parts to their satisfaction, or they will throw up their engagements at the last moment. Dramatic consistency is not looked for in a pantomime; anything and everything can be introduced—according to the manager's idea—from a performing elephant down to a baby reciter. Though the story may be decided upon, and the commission placed in the author's hands during the dog-days, the actual writing of the "book" should generally be deferred until the manager has made all his engagements. If it be commenced off-hand he may have to do his work all over again.

As soon as the rehearsals are set on foot the author's anxieties commence. His MS. is subjected to all manner of alterations at the hands of the stage-manager, the principal comedian, and the musical director. The "property man" delays the making of the most important "properties" until the last, in the hope of having them commuted. Every one in the company insists on monopolising the stage for seven minutes at least twice in the course of the evening, to indulge a cherished song and dance. The topical allusions are overruled by the comedians, who drag in their own "hits" and "gags" so clumsily that the "book"

becomes a mere patchwork. The comic songs of the season have to be turned into concerted pieces, new words appropriate to the pantomime-story being substituted for the originals, and so on.

A pantomime entails more destruction to an author's peace of mind than any other kind of play; and yet, notwithstanding his thousand-and-one cares, his work is always an "enormous success."

One good reason why modern pantomimes are built upon a well-worn story, is that the incidental processions, ballets, songs, and "business" take up so much time as to prevent the juvenile audience from following the plot if they are not perfectly familiar with it.

CURTAIN-RAISERS

One-act farces have had their day. Farcical curtain-raisers or afterpieces are nowhere in demand except in the music-halls, where they pass muster as "sketches," in defiance of the law which prohibits the performance of a stage-play in an unlicensed building. Non-copyright farces, and even dramas, are now regularly boiled down into music-hall "sketches" by hack-writers employed by the "artistes" who perform them. There is no copyright in an original music-hall "sketch," because its performance is illegal. An author who allows his playlet to be performed in a music-hall has no

protection if the "artistes" he has entrusted with it pay him no fees; his only safe plan is to sell it to them for what they are willing to pay.

Years ago a farce writer derived a substantial revenue from the performance of his work at the regular theatres. It is not so now. Low comedians are too much on their dignity to play in first-pieces. Under the new *régime* curtain-raisers are chiefly sustained by the "understudies" and players of small parts in the *pièce de résistance*.

A comedietta or a serious playlet is the only species of curtain-raiser that can profitably employ the pen of an author trying his 'prentice hand at playwriting. If a comedietta or drama, it must depend more upon its pathos than its humour; it must not cause too much laughter, as that would have a tendency to kill the fun of the farcical comedy, or other light play, which forms the staple evening's entertainment. The contrast of a pathetic curtain-raiser is much affected in these days of rollicking three-act farces. Owing to their great length, melodramas now fill out the entire evening bill; it is only when an old drama is revived that a curtain-raiser becomes possible at Drury Lane, the Princess's, the Adelphi, and such houses. But at all the smaller houses curtain-raisers are in constant demand. The *pièce de résistance* does not commence before 8.30 or 8.45, by which time the late diners are comfortably settled in their seats. The patrons of the cheaper

parts of the house, who go to see a successful play again and again, do so with the greater zest when they find that the first-piece has been changed since their last visit. A simple story, dramatically told, by preference one that women can weep over, best suits the requirements of a manager who has to "play in" his audiences with a curtain-raiser. If an author can write such a playlet effectively and well, it stands a good chance of being accepted, and the small success so achieved may serve him as a stepping-stone to higher things.

Musical curtain-raisers are also in demand. By interesting the musical director of a theatre in the *completed* libretto, and inviting him to compose the music, the way to production is easy. Collaboration with an unknown composer might not be so fruitful of good results. In the consideration of all musical plays, the orchestral conductor has a voice, and professional jealousy is rife among musicians. At a theatre devoted to comic opera, a good musical first-piece has every chance of acceptance, if it is introduced by the gentleman who wields the baton. This is a fact worth knowing.

Dramatists mostly commence their career by writing short one-act plays, but authors who excel in writing curtain-raisers are wise in letting three-act plays severely alone. It, moreover, is the best way to begin writing for the stage, as thereby the young author gains knowledge and experience.

MORE AMBITIOUS PIECES

The remarks which have been made in the first section of this work concerning paragraph announcements of a new book refer equally to a play. An author should never rely on a manager paragraphing his acceptance of a play: he should attend to it himself.

When once an author has gained the ear of a manager with a curtain-raiser, the obstacles that have previously beset his path will be removed. No longer will he be informed, in answer to his inquiries, that "all our arrangements are made, therefore it would be useless to invite you to send your play." His work will be treated with respect; it will be eagerly courted on all hands. After following up his initial success with another curtain-raiser, he can, always provided he feels equal to it, set to work upon a more pretentious play. If it be an actor's show-piece, its acceptance will depend upon its suitability for that particular actor's special purpose. If it be a society play—the feminine counterpart of an actor's show-piece—he should have no difficulty in getting a successful actress to lend him countenance. A well-known business manager taking his annual benefit will often produce a good all-round play for a tried author, subject to the payment of the licensing fees. This would be a favour-

able opportunity of placing a farcical comedy that is not an actor's show-piece. The performers invariably give their services on the occasion of a benefit.

AUTHORS' FEES

Though it may be his first attempt, an author should never be tempted to sell a publicly-approved play outright. Managers often expect to buy a curtain-raiser for a mere trifle. If it be good enough to run for a month, it is worth keeping, in view of future profit. Thirty shillings to three pounds a week is a fair royalty for a successful curtain-raiser. Mr. Brandon Thomas received eight pounds ten shillings by way of fees for "The Colour-Sergeant," and then sold it outright to Mr. Wilson Barrett for a hundred pounds!

The fees for a *pièce de résistance* vary considerably, according to the class of play, theatre, and manager. It is all a matter of arrangement. At one time a pound per act per night was considered adequate, but things have improved very much of late years, and a percentage on the gross takings of each night's performance is a usual arrangement. An author of reputation usually stipulates for a certain sum on account of royalties before his play is produced. Mr. W. S. Gilbert received a thousand pounds in advance for "Brantingham Hall," produced by Mr. Rutland Barrington at the St. James's

Theatre. When Mr. Jerome's "Woodbarrow Farm" was successfully tried at a *matinée*, Mr. Hare secured it for the Garrick Theatre, paying a certain sum down on account of royalties, but, as he did not produce the play within the stipulated period according to agreement, it reverted to the author.

Authors should always make some reservation in regard to the production of an accepted play, otherwise managerial procrastination may cause them serious loss. It is one thing to have a play accepted, and quite another to compel the manager to produce it, unless he is bound down by a time-limit, cited in an agreement. On the other hand, where a manager secures a play for very little money, he generally produces it without delay. Mr. Willie Edouin bought "Our Flat" of Mrs. Musgrave for forty pounds; Mr. J. M. Barrie disposed of his entire interest in "Walker, London," for two hundred and fifty pounds, but Mr. Toole afterwards solaced him with a bonus out of the profits of his highly-successful play.

The monetary value of a London success is very great. A small fortune may be realised by the fees accruing from the nightly performances in London alone. Then there are the country, American, foreign, and colonial rights to swell the author's banking account, if he has not been so foolish as to sell his work outright.

TOURING COMPANIES

A London success is generally sent round the provinces by the manager who produces it. He may send out two or three companies, or, if he be an actor-manager, our country cousins may not have an opportunity of seeing the play until he visits a few of the best towns with the original company at the close of his London season. An author should not be too ready to give an eminent actor-manager the exclusive rights of performing his play in the provinces. Many good plays—actor's show-pieces—are virtually lost to the world at large, because actor-managers, popularly identified with certain parts, are unwilling to entrust them to inferior, or it may be rival, performers. With the exception of "Our Boys," Byron's comedies are now never played, not a few of them having been written for Mr. Toole, and after their course was run, shelved. This is the natural result of selling a play outright. If it achieve a signal success, the actor-manager will want to keep it in his own hands. The wise dramatist is he who "lets" his play to a manager willing to produce it as long as it holds the stage, with the option of reviving it at a future date.

AMATEUR CLUBS

A successful play should not be printed, except for strictly private circulation. Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Pinero, who have published their plays, are in a position to protect themselves when their acting rights are infringed. If the play be a curtain-raiser, suitable for amateurs, two or three type-written copies should be deposited with Mr. Samuel French, the theatrical publisher in the Strand, who will collect the fees for performing them, on commission. Mr. French is much too shrewd a man to allow a play to pass out of his hands without a substantial deposit. A small standing advertisement in the *Era* and the *Stage* might prove serviceable, particularly if the author wish to treat with amateurs direct. "The Amateur's Handbook," containing a list of London and provincial amateur dramatic clubs and musical societies, is a useful work of reference.

DRAMATISING NOVELS

The dramatisation of a published novel calls for a few particular remarks. Novels may not be dramatised without authorisation. It is perfectly true that "East Lynne," "Called Back," and many other popular novels have yielded actors, managers, and playwrights golden fruits of success; but since what

is known as "the Fauntleroy decision," the unauthorised playwright practically finds his occupation gone. In the case of *Warne v. Seeböhm* it was ruled that the defendant, in causing a dramatic version of Mrs. Burnett's "Little Lord Fauntleroy" to be represented on the stage, had technically multiplied substantial portions of the novel by furnishing the actors and actresses with their parts, and this was an infringement of the Copyright Act. However unsatisfactory this ruling may seem to be, it nevertheless bars the unauthorised playwright from appropriating the dialogue of a modern novel.

Since the Fauntleroy decision it has not been so necessary for a novelist to secure the dramatic rights in his work by means of a copyright performance. The Seeböhm version of "Little Lord Fauntleroy" at the Prince of Wales's Theatre had the prior claim to copyright, as a stage production, against that of "The Real Little Lord Fauntleroy" at the Opera Comique; and on that account Mrs. Burnett and her publishers had no case. It was on the technical ground of the "multiplication of copies" that they won the day. On the other hand, Mr. Beerböhm Tree's attempts to prevent the representation of unauthorised stage versions of "Trilby" failed, for the simple reason that the Haymarket play was not copyright in this country, being the work of an American citizen, and originally produced in the United States. In all probability, had Mr. Du

Maurier instituted legal proceedings as the author of the *book*, his claims would have been recognised. Pending the much-needed amendment of the existing copyright laws, the Fauntleroy decision does actually afford protection to the authorised adapter of a novel for the stage; for while he can make free use of the dialogue as it stands, others have to draw upon their own resources. It is almost unnecessary to add that the requisite authorisation to dramatise a novel should be conveyed in writing, and that the document should be stamped.

ADAPTATIONS

Plays "taken from the French" are no longer in vogue. This is perhaps a good sign, showing that we are becoming more honest in our business relations with our neighbours across the Channel. Instead of boldly stealing a French play and serving it up as an adaptation, our authors now make a bid for the English rights, by which proceeding unauthorised versions are barred. The system works both ways. An English play adapted for representation abroad must be authorised. By the terms of the Berne Convention, the dramatic rights of authors' works are protected in all the countries embraced in the Convention.

CONCLUSION

The only remaining point to be dwelt upon before concluding is that the duration of the copyright of a play in this country is the same as that of a published work, namely, forty-two years from the date of production, or the author's lifetime and seven years after—whichever is the longer period. In the United States it endures for twenty-eight years, with an extension of fourteen years in favour of the author and his heirs, subject to a new registration. This means that the play must be printed and deposited like a book.

Latterly English playwrights have attempted, with some success, to protect the American rights of their plays by depositing two carefully printed copies at the Library of Congress, at Washington, on the date of the English production. This method of "bluffing it" has not so far been called into question. It probably entails less expense than a theatrical production on "the other side." The like procedure in regard to a Transatlantic production, however, would not work well in the Mother Country, for, as we know, copyright in a stage-play can only be secured by actual representation. If an English author print his play prior to production, he should be careful to inscribe it, on the title-page, "Printed for private circulation."

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